

THE ENSEMBLE THEATRE

Janette L. Cosley, Executive Director

It is no secret that the vibrancy and the soul of a city can be measured by the state of the arts. With that in mind, all agree that Houston is a very healthy city and its cultural diversity is the foundation upon which many are moved to call it a “rich” city.

One of Houston’s jewels is The Ensemble Theatre located in the heart of Midtown. The theme for the 2008-2009 Season was “Passport To Adventure” and each of the season’s six plays highlighted the wealth of talent that can be found in Houston. The plays range from dramas that deepened our understanding of the human spirit to musicals that awakened the songs in our souls. The spring production of “Constant Star” celebrated the life of former slave Ida B. Wells, who became a pioneer of civil rights in her lifetime. Her great-granddaughter, Michelle Duster attended the play and participated in a rich dialogue with the audience.

The Ensemble’s production of “The Wiz” proved historical on many levels. It was the first time that a show completely sold out **before the opening performance** and it was the first time that a show was extended two times! It gave the staff the experience of running at capacity during an entire production and it brought new patrons to the theatre. “The Wiz” was also performed two nights at Miller Outdoor Theatre and the attendance set new records for The Ensemble with a total attendance of 22,000 over the two days. Miller Theatre officials stated the demand for the free tickets hit a new record with people lining up at their box office at 5:45 a.m. on the first day. Eight hundred people were in line when the box office opened. That kind of reception from the Houston community says to us that we are making a great impact with our productions and programs and Houstonians are appreciating all that we do.

During the season, The Ensemble partnered with community groups such as Missouri City Chapter of The Links, Inc., Texas Southern University, AIDS Foundation Houston, Sankofa Pan African Organization, and the Houston Arts Alliance. Tavis Smiley’s tour, “Accountable – Making America As Good As Its Promise” was held at The Ensemble in March and it gave the theatre national exposure. Each of these partners exposed new audiences to The Ensemble.

While the plays at The Ensemble explore the lives of African Americans, the goal is to extend our capacity to understand one another as members of a global community. The Ensemble Theatre’s strategic plan calls for growth in the number of subscribers, an increase in earned income and expanding community outreach while maintaining the intimacy and welcoming atmosphere that The Ensemble is known for. We invite each of you to a theatre experience that entertains you and also moves you to imagine how much better life can be when our understanding of Houston’s diverse communities is increased.

Benjamin Cain, Jr and Broderick Jones in “Radio Golf”



Annual Report Impact Statement

Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of donors, every aspect of this theatre was enhanced by support from public; corporations, foundations and private funding. Our box office welcomes more than 250 new subscribers to the theatre as we continue to offer packages for our mainstage season. We have more than 200 individual donors to Annual Fund and we are always enhanced by our corporate supporters, the City of Houston and the State of Texas.

- **Better facility.** The focus for the 33rd season of The Ensemble is to improve our building to enhance the experience of the patron. We know that you have come to expect exceptional performances from our shows. We also know that it is just as important that your visit to The Ensemble be as enjoyable as the performances and venues you attend.
- **Enhanced Promotions through Facebook and our Website.** Check our website for information about what's happening at the theatre! If you're not a Facebook friend, be sure and add The Ensemble Theatre as we share our milestones and information about plans, shows and activities that take place at the theatre.
- **One Less Production with Much More Impact.** The decision to move from six productions each season to five was made easy when we considered the impact of our artistic message we wanted to leave with our audiences and the best way to provide that impact. Our performers give 100% and in preparation of each production we dedicate ourselves to strengthening the art. Our focus as we move forward is to make every moment between our mainstage shows a professional opportunity to enhance what we bring to Houstonians and visitors to our great city that come to enjoy our artistic quality.
- **Participation in the National Black Theatre Festival.** The Ensemble Theatre was invited to bring its mainstage production of "Sty of the Blind Pig" to the festival during the 2008-2009 Season. The honor of this selection belongs to everyone in association with the theatre. Our work was well received and celebrated during our time in North Carolina. We are so proud that The Ensemble Theatre is gaining national recognition. It is our mission to preserve African American artistic expression and enrich a diverse community and we are true to the mission.

Most importantly, we celebrate you. Your generosity allows us to continue developing, showcasing and sharing opportunities in all that we provide. We thank you for coming again and again to The Ensemble Theatre and we strive to continue to see you in the future. On behalf of our Board of Directors, cast members and staff your continued commitment to this theatre is a Majestic Treasure.

With deepest gratitude,

The Ensemble Theatre

**Wayne DeHart and Joseph P. Palmore
in "The Man Who Saved New Orleans"**



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AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Audience development endeavors have proven successful in reuniting former subscribers and patrons with the theatre and generating growing new interests. A well developed grassroots subscription drive campaign designed to build relationships with individuals and organizations is helping the theatre cultivate future theatre supporters. The 30th Anniversary season saw a nearly 300% increase in subscription sales that the theatre continues to maintain. Rigorous customer service expectations have brought 75%-80% retention with 10%-15% new referrals who subscribe. The Ensemble has grown its subscriptions and audience significantly over the last two years. Tracking our success through patron surveys is one of our successful methods of enhancing the theatre experience. Most notably is the response to our survey questions regarding customer satisfaction, rating over 90% above average. Our theatre audience spans multiple generations; engaging grandparents, parents and their children in this enriching performance art form. In our continuing efforts to encourage subscriptions and single ticket purchases we have created new mediums of advertising that were not in place two years ago. Each season we create new partnerships to reach new audiences that have not experienced our unique theatre. Our 2008-2009 Season, "Passport to Adventure: Embrace the Journey" received rave reviews!

The season ended with our annual black tie gala, attended by more than 450 guests. The gala is one of the city's most celebrated events and true to years past, this was a not-to-be missed evening of honors and entertainment. This event is a major source of funding for the theatre and not only did it meet our fiscal goal, it exceeded the goal! A special thank you is extended to all of our honorees and our event co-chairs for their efforts during the season and support for our future.

Eileen J. Morris, Artistic Director

One of the most powerful aspects of live theatre is witnessing the words of a playwright come to life, an actor embrace and dedicate themselves to the character, a designer create and interpret the concept, and an audience that benefits from the collective process. This year's journey took Houston by storm.

The Ensemble Theatre's Passport to Adventure Season took the theatre to new heights in its producing and presenting of the art; art that speaks to the mission and vision of the organization that engages a diverse community and the world. Within our art, we continuously challenged ourselves with our artists-always seeking the best skilled and creative actor. In addition, we brought together an amazing production team of talented and imaginative light, set, sound and costume designers that initiated honest and skilled dynamics that would enhance each production. We engaged our youth, students, community and others in workshops, master classes, and fundamentals of the art that would provide a platform for performance reflective of the mission and vision of the organization. We opened the doors of discovery, enhancement, education, research and process for all people. Once again, in order to extend our commitment to fostering an interdisciplinary appreciation of the arts, and optimal opportunities for visibility, growth, and new ways of engaging audiences; we partnered with The Museum of Fine Arts, Lone Star College-Cy Fair, Houston Independent School District, LaMarque ISD, the Missouri City and Houston Chapter of the Links, Inc community churches and organizations, the Children's Museum of Houston, The Alley Theatre, University of Texas- San Marcus, Young Audiences of Houston, Sam Houston State University and the national organizations –St. Louis Black Repertory, Howard University, Penumbra Theatre Company, the August Wilson Cultural Center, Black Theatre Network and the National Black Theatre Festival.

The Ensemble Theatre is proud of the high quality and creative talent and artists that are gracing our stage and theatre. They represent the best within our community. The theatre has received wonderful accolades for its excellence from local media, national opportunities and above all, YOU, our audience. Our art is important in that it assists us in strengthening our knowledge, it affords us an opportunity to celebrate our diversity, and it touches upon the creative spirit that is put forth within us.

Each of our artists has an unconditional passion to distribute and be a part of the best art imaginable. We take seriously the gifts that have been given to us as artists as we know, believe and are guided by the universe. We recognize that the art is reflective of what is involved in our daily living and we value in its delight.

Box Office Impact

The 2008 – 2009 patron support breakdown is listed as:

Subscriptions 2008 -2009:

Each subscription represents an individual in support of our mainstage season. Based on incentives, special offers and donor preferences, we see our support vary from each constituency and sometimes, translate into greater individual ticket sales.

2008 – 2009 AUDIENCE FIGURES

MAINSTAGE PERFORMANCES	160
MAINSTAGE ATTENDANCE	40,000
TOURING PERFORMANCES	
ATTENDANCE	53,800

**Kendrick Brown, Byron Jacquet, Joseph Palmore,
Estella Henderson, Joyce Anastasia Murray
and BeBe Wilson in "Livin' Fat"**



SUPPORTING THE ARTS IN HOUSTON

It has been reported by the Houston Arts Alliance that in Houston alone, more than 500 non-profit arts organizations make up \$625 million of the national industry. The Ensemble Theatre's budget is \$1.6 million and supports more than 250 actors, artists, technicians, staff members and part time artistic assistants. More than just our mainstage shows make up our identity. Our community profile of offering programs through education and outreach is a huge part of our goal and our passion. We have a commitment to making certain that this art form is accessible to all of Houston and even offer low-cost and/or free performances to bring shows to schools and community centers.

The importance of introducing art at an early age is paramount to keeping this an active part of our culture and our city's landscape. We introduce The Ensemble to area youth through our Performing Arts Education (PAE) Initiative Program. The program has two ways in which we fulfill our goals:

The Tour Education program successfully built upon and expanded its tradition for Houston-area outreach and education. The program outline:

- Provide Houston-area students with access to plays during the season and academic year with our Tour Education program.
- Offer curriculum materials designed specifically for Tour Education.
- While serving all Houston-area students (estimated 30,000), our goal is to target children from underserved and economically disadvantaged communities and schools with large ethnic minority populations.

There are several ways to access the benefits of the Tour Education program offerings:

- Members of the PAE acting company present a repertoire of four age appropriate plays.
- Schools are able to hire a professional PAE artist to conduct a theatre arts workshop or residency.
- The Ensemble Theatre also offers Performing Artist in Residence opportunities. This allows students to directly engage the PAE artists when they come to their campuses and work with students to perform a live theatrical performance.

The second PAE Initiative is The Young Performers Program (YPP), started in 1985. This is an intensive summer training program for youth ages 7 to 17 and encompasses structured instruction in the disciplines of stage acting, dance, vocal and instrumental music, technical theatre and production techniques. Since its inception, more than 3000 Houston-area youth, including some who are now professionals of Broadway, the film industry and television, have participated in this exciting program.

The goal of the YPP is not merely to teach young people to be artists, but to provide a place of discovery where young people build self-esteem, confidence, friendships, and discover their own artistic gifts. Distinctively, the YPP enables young people to experience the arts through the richness of African-American creative expression.

All this and more is done with your support and your assistance. The major component of our Tour Education program is The Ensemble Theatre's Guild, which ensures transportation to and from schools and area centers for our performances. The Guild has 100 members who volunteer their time, talent and resources to making certain this remains a low/no-cost component of Tour Education.

We know that in a city the size of Houston there are so many opportunities to get involved and support worthwhile organizations. We acknowledge and appreciate your choice in The Ensemble Theatre. Whether you volunteer, patronize our mainstage, enroll your child(ren) in our youth program, contribute to or rent our facility, you are a part of our family and we work together to create a legacy of excellence at The Ensemble Theatre.



“Healthy Choices, a Tour Education production”

THE AUDREY LAWSON ARENA MAINSTAGE PRODUCTIONS FOR 2008 - 2009

RADIO GOLF, *Regional Premiere*

By August Wilson
 Directed by Eileen J. Morris
 Cast: Cheray Dawn Josiah, Benjamin Cain, Jr., Broderick Jones, Henry Edwards, Jr. and Wayne DeHart
 Costume Design: Connie Bradshaw and Shirley Marks Whitmore
 Scenic Design: James V. Thomas
 Lighting Design: Eric Marsh
 Sound Design: Adrian Washington
 Stage Manager: Kendrick Brown
 Property design: James V. Thomas
Performance Run: Sept. 20 – Oct. 19, 2008

Cast: Broderick Jones, Rachel Hemphill Dickson, Wayne DeHart, Raiya Goodman, Jaida Wyatt, Joseph P. Palmore, Byron Jacquet and Bebe Wilson
 Costume Design: Gregory Horton
 Lighting Design: Kris Phelps
 Sound Design: Wayne DeHart
 Scenic Design: Winifred Sowell
 Property Design: James V. Thomas
 Stage Manager: Tracey Wheat
 Performance Run: Jan. 24 – Feb. 22, 2009

Cast: Kendrick Brown, Byron Jacquet, Joseph Palmore, Estella Henderson, Joyce Anastasia Murray and BeBe Wilson
 Costume Design: Liz Tee
 Lighting Design: David Gipson
 Sound Design: Adrian Washington
 Scenic Design: Tierney Malone
 Property Design: James V. Thomas
 Stage Manager: Henry Edwards, Jr.
 Hair Design: Derrick Nash
 Performance Run: Apr. 25 – May 24, 2009

THE TWELVE WAYS OF CHRISTMAS

Book, Music and Lyrics by Carlton Leake
 Directed and Choreographed by Patdro Harris
 Cast: Kimberley Stewart, Margaret Hoffman, Melanie Finley, Anthony Boggess-Glover, Andrew Jackson, Jennifer Colvin and Darrell T. Joe
 Costume Design: Liz Tee
 Scenic and Property Design: James V. Thomas
 Lighting Design: David Gipson
 Sound Design: Adrian Washington
 Stage Manager: Broderick Jones
 Performance Run: Nov. 22 – Dec. 28, 2008

CONSTANT STAR, *Regional Premiere*
Produced in collaboration with Lone Star College-Cy Fair

By Tazewell Thompson
 Directed by Ron Jones
 Choreography by Tommacina Bell
 Musical Direction by DuWayne Davis
 Cast: Cynthia Brown, JoAnne David-Jones, Shaunyce Omar, Roenia Thompson and Detria Ward
 Costume Design: Claremarie Verheyen
 Lighting Design: Kris Phelps
 Sound Design: Adrian Washington
 Scenic Design Jodi Bobrovsky
 Stage Manager: Broderick Jones
 Performance Run: Mar. 14 – Apr. 12, 2009
 Special Lone Star College Performances: April 16 - 19

**THE WIZ
 Two Extensions!**

Book by: William F. Brown.
 Music and Lyrics by Charlie Smalls
 Musical Direction by Carlton Leake
 Directed and Arranged by Patdro Harris
 Cast: Melanie Finley, Tommie Harper, Anthony Boggess-Glover, Gary E. Vincent and Henry Edwards, Jr. with: Eddie Bassey, Joshua Bolden, Bryant Bowie, Jennifer Colin, Justin Cook, Raiya Goodman, Tamara Harper, Kenyatta B. Herring, Margaret Hoffman, Vincent James, Danielle King, Shaunyce Omar, Maya Petty, Crystal Sharadin, Katlynn Smith, Roenia Thompson, Tracey E. Wheat and Tangela Wilson
 Costume Design: Reggie Ray
 Lighting Design: Eric Marsh
 Sound Design: Adrian Washington
 Scenic design: James V. Thomas
 Property Design: Winifred sowell
 Hair Design: Derrick Nash
 Stage Manager: Broderick Jones
 Performance Run: Jun. 20 – Aug. 30, 2009

THE MAN WHO SAVED NEW ORLEANS, *World Premiere*

By Thomas Meloncon
 Directed by Eileen J. Morris

LIVIN' FAT

By Judi Ann Mason
 Directed by Eileen J. Morris

Melanie Finley, Tommie Harper, Anthony Boggess-Glover and Gary E. Vincent in "The Wiz"



SUPPORTERS OF THE ENSEMBLE THEATRE

Contributions to The Ensemble Theatre are vital to our programs. A non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization relies of public funding to continue to operate. We greatly appreciate the wealth and breadth of support we receiving during the year. No matter the size of the contribution, every gift made a great impact on our operations. In acknowledgment of this support, thank you to all who made donations:

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**“Santa at The Ensemble
Volunteers”**



**The Ensemble Theatre Staff with Tavis Smiley
at “Tavis Smiley Presents”**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
FISCAL 2007-2008**

Current Assets	\$ 337,118
• Cash, Temporary cash investments, pledges receivable, accounts receivable and prepaid expenses.	
Noncurrent Assets	\$2,865,166
• Property and Equipment less accumulated depreciation and amortization	
Current Liabilities	\$ 253,529
• Accounts payable, current note payable, unearned revenue and other current liabilities.	
Long Term Liabilities	
• Note payable	
Net Assets	\$2,407,926
• Unrestricted net assets and temporarily restricted net assets	
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$2,865,166

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Revenue and Support	
Artistic Revenue	\$ 668,347
Contributions	\$ 81,019
In Kind Contribution Income	\$ 106,277
In Kind fundraising Proceeds	\$ 55,593
Grants and Foundations	\$ 440,692
Facility Rentals	\$ 48,705
Fundraising Proceeds	\$ 399,001
Other Income	\$ 1,964
Total Revenue and Support	\$1,801,598
Expenses	
Program Services	\$1,333,898
Support Services	\$0
Management and General	\$ 244,788
Fundraising	\$ 217,364
Support Services	\$ 462,152
Total Expenses	\$1,796,050
(Decrease)/Increase in Net Assets	\$ 5,548
Net Assets @ Beginning of Year	\$2,402,378
Net Assets, End of Year	\$2,407,926



JoAnne David-Jones, Detria Ward, Shaunyce Omar, Roenia Thompson and Cynthia Brown in "Constant Star"

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS	\$ 5,548
Cash Flows from Operating Activities:	
Increase in net assets	
Adjustments to reconcile increase in net assets to	
Net cash provided by operating activities:	
Depreciation and Amortization	\$119,827
Write off of pledge receivable	\$ 8,954
Decrease in accounts receivable	\$ 2,148
Increase in pledges receivable	(\$ 8,008)
Increase in prepaid expenses	(\$ 25,623)
Increase in unearned revenue	\$ 38,383
Increase in accounts payable and other current liabilities	\$152,105
Total Adjustments	
Net Cash provided by operating activities	\$157,653
Cash Flows Used by Investing Activities:	
Purchase of Property and Equipment	(\$ 6,677)
Net cash used by investing activities	(\$ 6,677)
Cash Flows Used by Financing Activities:	
Decrease in note payable	(\$ 25,645)
Net Cash used by financing activities	(\$ 25,645)
Net Increase in Cash and cash Equivalents	\$125,331
Cash, Beginning of Year	\$ 16,464
Cash, End of Year	\$141,795
Supplemental Disclosure of cash Flows:	
Cash paid during year for interest	\$ 15,111

A copy of The Ensemble Theatre's audited financial statement and 990s are available by contacting The Ensemble Theatre's Development Office at 713-807-4304. The Ensemble Theatre is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

The Ensemble Theatre would like to acknowledge Mr. David Bray, the photographer for the photos presented in this report and our resident program photographer.

The Ensemble Theatre would like to extend a special acknowledgment of appreciation to actress Ella Joyce. The 9th annual Heart of the Theatre honoring subscribers for the mainstage season presented entertainment by Ms. Joyce's one woman performance of *A Rose Among Thorns*, a tribute to Rosa Parks at the Wortham Theatre, Cullen auditorium in May, 2009.

**Ella Joyce at the 2009
"Heart of The Theatre"**

