

noteworthy

Altamont Theatre Opening Season

The much anticipated opening season of the new Altamont Theatre Company in downtown Asheville is just around the corner. The Altamont's first Off-Broadway musical production will open September 13 in the newly renovated location at 18 Church Street. *Pete 'n Keely*, a rousing comedy, will run select dates through September 25.

The year is 1968, when Pete Bartel and Keely Stevens reunite for a live television show retracing their illustrious musical career on TV, in Las Vegas showrooms, and at the top of the hit parade. Their commercial break antics will soon reveal why they are divorced and have not spoken in five years. New York City performers and Broadway veterans, Jan Herndon and Stephen Berger, will bring to life many favorite songs, like "Fever" and "Black Coffee."

This professional musical theater is the fruition of the dream of entrepreneur and Altamont Executive Director Brian Lee and Tiffany Hampton, a long time musical theater performer, who is Artistic Director for the Altamont. Lee and Hampton moved to Asheville in 2007 to get away from the hectic lifestyle of New York City and raise their two small children.

Hampton's father, the late George Thomas Hampton, Jr., was born in Asheville. He suggested the name for the theater, paying homage to the city of Altamont, the fictitious Asheville in Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward Angel*.

Earlier this year, the Altamont received The Griffin, an award given by The Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County in recognition of outstanding contributions to historic preservation. The theatre qualified in the Adaptive Re-use category due to the owners' attention to detail in preserving historical aspects during the building renovations.

Lee added, "The basement and first floor are the lobby and theater space, plus an art gallery featuring the work of nationally acclaimed artists. The two upper levels are six fully furnished short term rental condominiums." Altamont Director of Development Honor Moor stated they anticipate supporting the local economy in a significant way, as about 5,000 patrons annually take advantage of nearby restaurants and businesses.

BY CHERRY HART

The intimate setting of the Altamont's black-box arrangement gives the audience of 120 an up-close and personal view of the action. Table seating invites theatre guests to enjoy a glass of wine while listening to great performances in a relaxed environment.

Hampton said that auditions are held in New York City and Asheville with invitations extended to union actors. Local productions will be directed by nationally renowned directors between their projects in larger metropolitan cities.

Bill Russell, Asheville City Councilmember and Chairman of Altamont Theatre Company's Board of Directors, said, "The Altamont is the greatest entertainment and creative addition to Asheville that I've seen in the last decade. I'm certain the Altamont will become an entertainment centerpiece in Asheville, attracting folks from all around the region. I can't imagine ever missing any of the productions."

Moog Music President Mike Adams remarked, "The Altamont Theatre continues



Taking a break from the many preparations for the coming season of musical productions, Brian Lee (left) and Tiffany Hampton, owners of the Altamont Theatre, pause near the doors of the black-box performance area. Photo: Cherry Hart

a great tradition of theatre here in Asheville dating back to the 1940's, when Charlton Heston ran the local community theatre. In my role with Moog Music, I feel an obligation to support the arts. Serving on the Board of the Altamont is one small opportunity I have to give back to this rich history."

Actress and Asheville resident Andie MacDowell is also a member of Altamont's Board of Directors. She commented about the upcoming productions, "I'm a big fan of performance theater in Asheville. We have so many great venues here. The approach of the Altamont in bringing NYC caliber musicals here adds to the unique atmosphere of our city."

The only professional musical theatre company in downtown Asheville, the Altamont promises to meet its mission as it "inspires, educates, and entertains by performing professional musicals and plays that touch the hearts of audiences of all ages."



Purchase tickets at the box office or online at www.TheAltamont.com. Adults \$35; Seniors \$32;

Students \$30; Call (828) 270-7747 or visit the website for group sales.



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ALTAMONT PERFORMANCES

Pete 'n Keely

September 13-18 & 21-25; Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 7:30 p.m.; Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m.; Sunday at 2:30 p.m.

Songs for a New World

November 2-13, 2011

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