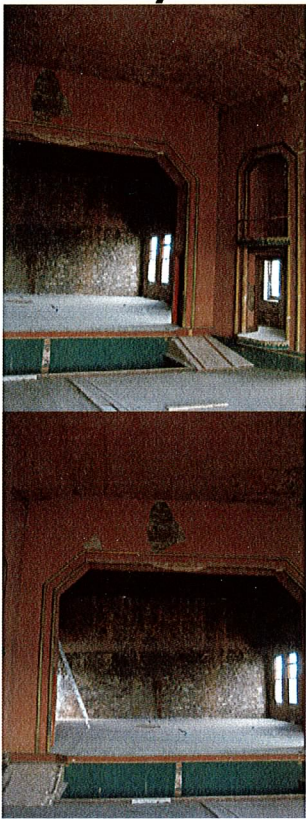


Pratt Performing Arts Centre Albion New York

First Performance in 100 years.



Inside the Pratt Performing Arts Centre as it looks today. It needs work but the exterior is solid and the interior is now safe from the

Carol Culhane Artist in Residence

What a wonderful opportunity

Who would have ever guessed an opportunity for a grant through GO Art would work out to be such an extraordinary event for the Village of Albion. I applied for the Ripple Grant in 2006. It is an individual artist's grant awarded on the merits of the artist and the project to have a value to the community. The artworks purpose is to contribute to the community, for the community's view and enjoyment. I was so

pleased to be awarded the grant and to have a chance to contribute to my community.

The first time I walked into the Pratt I fell in love. If you closed your eyes and stood in front of the stage you could feel the excitement, hear the applause and visualize the performers taking a bow after the long applause and the plea for an encore. I knew somehow I had to be involved; I had to contribute to the

rehabilitation and ultimately having performers present their talent on this historical stage and opera theatre.

John Pratt, the owner and name sake of the building, had a vision and for a stretch of time realized his dream by creating what was touted as the grandest opera theatre between Rochester and Buffalo. There were troops of performers coming to Albion three and four per week for three decades.

A Little More Information

Michael Bonafede and Judy Koehler are the proud owners of the Pratt building. They purchased the building several years ago and had a vision and a 10 year plan. They have successfully been able to reestablish business spaces for which they have filled two floors with businesses. In the difficult times in which we live they have worked very hard in rehabilitating the building bringing it up to code and updated all the infrastructures make it a

viable part of the community.

They have put so much time, effort and money into this building I for one don't believe the Albion community will ever be able to express their gratitude and appreciation for their efforts.

I think know somewhat of the extent of what a successful performing arts centre means to them and I am grateful to know Mike and Judy. Few times in life

there are those who give more and expect less. I see them as fine community members with generous hearts and a finger on the pulse of a community they call home.

I applaud their efforts and their selfless giving to Albion.

Every time a performer stands on the Pratt stage I hope there is a moment they give thanks to people like Mike Bonafede and Judy Koehler.



Mr. John Pratt

Mr. Pratt was born February 28, 1816 in Oneida County and travel to Eagle Harbor in a covered wagon two years later. He purchased a farm of 200 acres and started raising wheat. He was very successful. He was a man of his word and woe to him who tried to trick him. His foresight was remarkable in seeing where value were.

After a devastating fire in the English block in February of 1882 Pratt immediately cleared the rubble and built the fabulous Pratt block that exists today. The Pratt Block was three stories high, with two stores on the main floor and a grand central staircase leading up to the second floor, where there were offices. The third floor was unfinished. In the vacant third floor, John Pratt (age 66) planned to build the grandest opera house that Albion had ever seen. The work began on June 2, 1890. The architect was Leon H. Lempert and he felt it was his best. The main floor seated 400 on padded folding chairs and the gallery seated 400 on unpadded chairs.

The Grand Opening was Monday September 1st when Tommy Russell Company presented E.H. House's dramatization of Mark Twain's "The Prince and the Pauper".

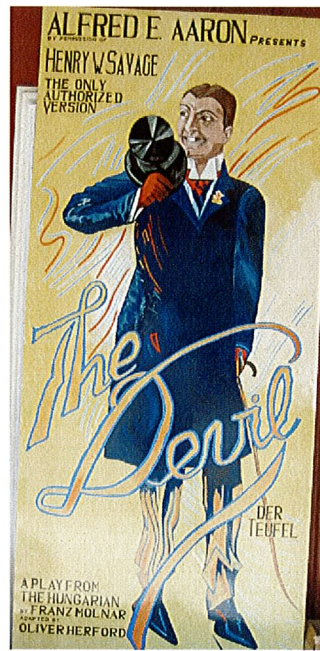
The Artwork

After visiting the Pratt and speaking with Judy and Michael, we decided the perfect fit for the Ripple Grant was to reproduce some of the billboards for the public's viewing. This would fit the criteria for public and community interest and encompass the arts as well.

When the Pratt was sold at least two owners ago, the billboards were cut from the walls, framed and auctioned off. They really were quite valuable I understand. Someone had the good sense to photograph each one. Judy and Mike had them enlarged to a poster size and kept them knowing someday they would come in handy.

The decision was made to reproduce "The Missouri Girl" and "The Devil". We also decided we needed to have a portrait of Mr. Pratt so he could overlook the rebirth of his building and his beloved opera theatre.

Then the work began.....



Two plays performed at the Pratt

The billboards are 4 by 8 feet in size and portray two of the international plays performed at the Pratt.

What is most fascinating to me is we had a wonderful performing arts center in Orleans County and people from all over

western New York visited here to see and hear all the wonderful actors perform.

I personally did not have any idea it was even there much less its history. Mr. Pratt was a very forward thinking individual and this was obviously very

passionate about the arts.

They are now positioned in the front of the Pratt building in the Performing Arts Centre windows. Just look up and there is Mr. Pratt enjoying the view of his beloved village.

She is only sleeping.....

The Pratt Performing Arts Centre's first performance in almost 100 years.

As Gary Simboli, vocal Music Teacher/Choral Director, so eloquently said about the Pratt, "she is only sleeping...waiting to be awakened". We are just starting to jostle her.

I was so moved by the performances of Maarit Vaga, owner of the Elsewhere Coffee House in the Pratt building and Gary Simboli. Their voices resonated in the space as if there were speaking for all the wonderful performers who had been on the stage before them.

The first time I stepped into the space I fell in love. It took my breath away to think we had such a "diamond in the rough" as the owners Michael Bonafede and

Judy Koehler refer to her, in our community.

There we were with the space full of people in awe of what they saw and what they heard. These are our performers, our community standing here in 2008 applauding their performance.

What a day it was. Gary closed the performance with "How Great Thou Art" and you knew someone greater than us had their hand on this event.

It is my privilege to be her artist in residence and to begin to encourage public awareness and interest in the possibilities. She is going to be even grander than she was 100 years ago and she is already adored by the community.

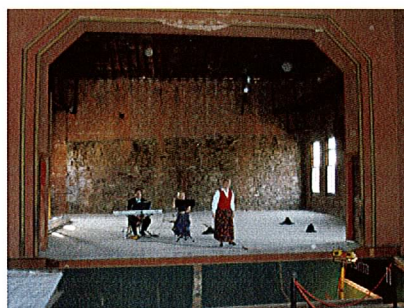
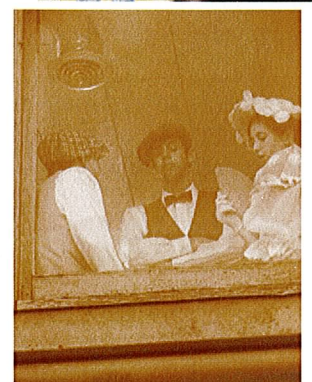
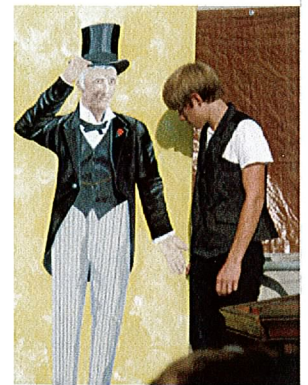
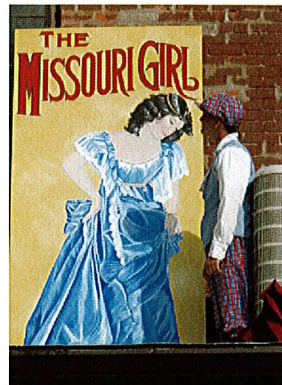


Photographs of the Grand Opening

There were over 250 people in attendance.



Michael Bonafede and Carol Culhane at the unveiling



Andrea Rebeck introducing Maarit Vaga and Gary Simboli on stage.