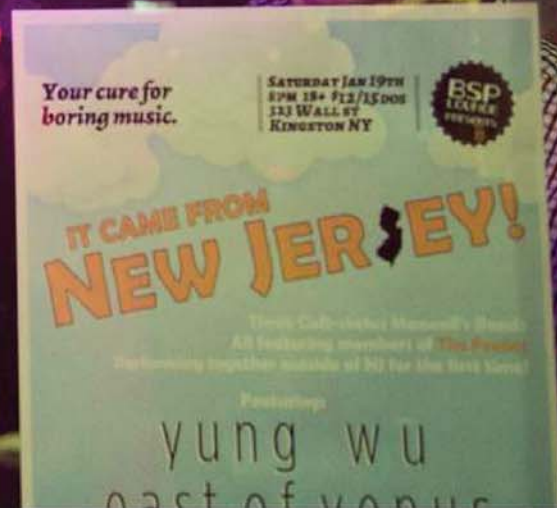


OPEN



Backstage Studio Productions is an optical illusion. With its unassuming glass storefront, tinted so you have to press your head to the window to look inside, one might never guess what lies

THROUGH THOSE DOORS >

BSP manager Trevor Dunworth peeks through the front window of this Kingston venue, which has become one of the most progressive arts and entertainment complexes in the region.



➤BSP comes front and center | By Lindsay Lennon Photos by Michael Bloom

What's inside Backstage Production's storefront is one of the most progressive arts and entertainment complexes in the region, a key player in the ongoing revitalization of Uptown Kingston.


Countless shindigs have been thrown in BSP's back room, a 21,000-square-foot playground that doubles as a soundstage. A mammoth backstage can host a band rehearsal or party. An upstairs dance studio hosts regular classes. And the front houses

the BSP Lounge, a paradise for young music lovers.

The building originally was built as a 2,500-seat vaudeville theater in the late 1800s and has also served as a movie theater. Teri Rossin purchased the building

in 2000, when, she said, the Stockade District was "a very different neighborhood." Rossin says the neighborhood turned into a ghost town after 5 p.m. But nowadays there's not a parking spot in the district day or night.

"More young people started to move in, and artists and musicians. When that happens, it kind of revitalizes the neighborhood," says Rossin. "I feel like Uptown has more vitality now than all



Members of the band Wild Carnation set up for a recent "It Came From New Jersey Show."

the times I've been there in the last 14 years."

Diversity of shows

The contrast between the Uptown Kingston of yesterday and today – with an influx of young art- and music-minded residents – is evident in the types of events showcased at Backstage and the numbers they bring. Backstage served as a participating venue for the O+ Festival, the weekend-

long fusion of free health care and independent music throughout the Stockade. There are the screenings of "Rocky Horror Picture Show" attracting upward of 1,000 attendees; the annual award ceremony of the Woodstock Film Festival, bringing such images as Vincent D'Onofrio smoking a cigarette sitting in a chair outside Backstage; V-Day Kingston; Hudson Valley BRAWL; and the filming of Blondie's music video for the song "Mother."

"It's really one of the few places in the Hudson Valley that has this big empty room that can be turned into anything," says Rossin.

Indeed, it has. Countless scenes have played out in this space, which echoes the feel of a general-admission concert hall: rowdy fans hollering at costume-clad female arm wrestlers; filmmakers and actors making acceptance speeches; and flashing

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COMING UP

Owner Teri Rossin says while BSP has always functioned as an event and education space, the recruitment of liveLIVE! Productions to run BSP Lounge has made live, original music the venue's most popular feature in the last few years. For a full listing of events, visit bsplounge.com or find it on Facebook at facebook.com/bsplounge.

9 p.m. March 2: Geezer, Daddy Long Legs, the Dead Exs. \$5.

9 p.m. March 30: Marco Benevento. \$10 advance, \$15 door.

9 p.m. April 13: Richard Buckner, William Tyler, Small Houses. \$9 advance, \$12 door.

9 p.m. April 27: Queerstock! – Dance party sponsored by Hudson Valley LGBTQ Center. Price TBD.

April-August: Battle of the Bands. \$5 Wednesday mini-battles, \$5 Aug. 16 main event. \$10 advance ticket for all shows.



East of Venus performs at the BSP Lounge's "It Came From New Jersey Show."

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lights, disco balls and vampires in drag at a "True Blood" Halloween party thrown by the Hudson Valley LGBTQ Center.

Most recently, Backstage played a part in the mind-blowing New Year's Eve celebration that Uptown dubbed "1913," when 1,000 celebrants dressed in period garb, drank era cocktails and jammed to music from the ballroom era.

'Huge tremors'

"New Year's was one of these huge tremors where you could really feel what's going on in Uptown," says Daniel Sternstein, marketing director of liveLIVE! Productions, the team that began booking the BSP Lounge in 2011.

liveLIVE! – Sternstein, production director Dan Votke and bar manager Trevor Dunworth – came from Oneonta, experienced in working music festivals.

"Every year, with the weather, something would happen," says Dunworth. "When we had the opportunity to come here and manage this and produce events here at BSP, I think the thing that excited us the most was we'd have a roof over our heads."

So the music hasn't stopped. The BSP Lounge plays host to a constant stream of local, regional and touring musicians, with talent consistently featured several nights a week. Talent buyer and promotions director Michael Amari takes a grassroots approach by cultivating relationships with bands and booking agents while coupling top-notch touring acts with complementing local musicians.

This means a band that may never have played outside the Valley may find itself opening for a touring musician en route to South by Southwest in Austin, Texas. These "scene-building shows" not only en-

hance BSP's connections to artists but also the artists' relationships with one another, turning BSP into what Sternstein calls "a community center for musicians."

Making it work

Matthew Cullen, a recording engineer, musician and producer who has worked with artists from My Morning Jacket to Mandy Moore, has performed at BSP in various musical incarnations including in the Duke McVinnie Band.

"For the first time, it's actually got an identity," says Cullen of the BSP building. "They've started to get a reputation that even if you didn't know who was playing, it would be good, because they only book good things there ... Kingston needs a place like that, and I'm glad to see them making it work."

Sometimes, it's all about timing: When Texan rockers Hacienda, whose last two



The many facets of BSP

BACKSTAGE STUDIO PRODUCTIONS (BSP)

at 323 Wall St., Kingston, is far more than just an event space. The six different components that exist within its walls – from a professional soundstage to an increasingly popular music venue to some of the Hudson Valley's most respected theater and dance programs – make this building a powerhouse of art and culture.

BSP Lounge: A music venue and event space featuring live entertainment several nights per week. Since August 2011, the BSP Lounge has been booked and managed by Oneonta imports liveLIVE! Productions, and has since become one of the Hudson Valley's premier music venues. "We've gotten the reputation ... of being the place to showcase a band," says marketing director Daniel Sternstein.

STAGES: A 17,000-square-foot black box theater space that serves as home of the annual Woodstock Film Festival award ceremonies and countless other events, as well as a teaching and performance theater for BSP's educational programming. "I wanted BSP to serve the community, to be a place where, if they had an event, that would be the place where those events happen," says owner Teri Rossin.

Soundstage: A professional-grade stage officially certified by New York state as a qualified soundstage, offering filmmakers substantial tax breaks on their projects. Film projects such as "Peace, Love and Misunderstanding" with Jane Fonda, "The Sisterhood of Night" starring Kal Penn, and the Blondie music video "Mother," which featured many local residents



as extras, were shot here.

WallSpace: The front room has also been used as a gallery space. The full bar and comfortable seating make it an attractive option for an art exhibition.

Dance Collective: BSP's professional dance program, housed in a 2,000-square-foot studio with full mirrors and professional-grade floors, is on the building's second floor, above the lounge. Both youth and adult classes are available in every type of dance, from hip-hop to ballet to jazz.

Stages in the Arts: Founded in 1987 by Beth Lipton, the Stages in the Arts program was formerly known as Woodstock Youth Theater. When the group was looking for a new home in 2001, Rossin officially took them under the BSP umbrella, giving them a permanent home at STAGES. The program was renamed and expanded to serve ages 6 to 24, offering a number of youth and adult theater and dance programs, summer camps and workshops. Stages in the Arts culminates in several full-scale productions every year, and many scholarships are offered annually.

albums were produced by the Black Keys' Dan Auerbach, were in New York to play "Late Show With David Letterman" on a Thursday, BSP snagged the group for Sunday.

"We bring in acts that people wouldn't expect to see in Kingston, or in the Hudson Valley at all," says Amari – such as local bassist Tony Levin, best known for his work with Peter Dinklage, and drummer Zack Alford, who's played with David Bowie and Billy Joel. "That's kind of what we work on day and night, and to also set the trends a little bit. If we bring someone in, the next time they come through the area, they might not play here – they might play somewhere else. But now they know about this area. They know how amazing the Hudson Valley is."

Adds Cullen: "If they continue to bring national touring acts through Kingston ... it Continued on next page



BSP, owned by Teri Rossin, pictured here, was used as a set for the 2010 movie "Rocksteady." File photo by Jeff Goulding

Where to find a copy of Ulster Magazine

Accord

Saunderskill Farms
A & M Hardware

Bearsville

Bear Cafe
Bearsville Theater/Restaurant Complex

Eddyville

Anchorage Restaurant

Ellenville

Aroma Thyme Bistro
Family of Ellenville
Barthel's Farm
Cohen's Bakery
Craft Chiropractic
Ellenville Hospital
Ellenville Public Library and Museum
Ellenville-Wawarsing Chamber of Commerce
Family Practice
Gaby's Café
Il Paradiso
Hollywood Cuts Hair Studio

Highland

Gateway Diner
Mariner's on the Hudson
Mid-Hudson Professional Offices

Highmount

Belleayre Conservatory

Hunter

Hunter Mountain Resort
Catskill Mountain Bookstore

Kerhonkson

Barringer's Diner
Key Bank
Provident Bank
Redding Dental Offices

Kingston

Adams Fairacre Farms
Avante
Barcone's Music Center
Barnes and Noble
Benedictine Hospital
Health Alliance
Broadway Lights Diner
Courtyard by Marriott
Deising's Bakeries
Florentina's Restaurant

Grand Street Medical Ctr.

Hampton Inn
Heritage Area information booth

Holiday Inn Kingston
Hudson Valley Coffee Traders

Joey D's Bagel & Deli
Kings Mall

King's Valley Diner
Kingston Heritage Area Visitors Center

Kingston Hospital
Medical Arts Pavilion

MAC Fitness centers
Madden's Fine Wines

Mariner's Harbor
Michael's Diner and Restaurant

Sensational Creations
Mid-Town Medical Arts Center

Monkey Joe Coffee
Roasting

Mother Earth's Storehouse
SUNY Ulster's Business Center

OK Mini Market
Fox Radio 98.9

Gabriel's Café
Rachel's Deli

Rosita's Restaurant
Stone Soup Food Co.

Sunrise Bagels and Deli
Super 8

Town of Ulster Public Library
UPAC

Half Moon Books
Ulster County Chamber of Commerce

E & S Discount Beer
Wiltwyck Golf Club

Times Herald-Record bureau
Edelweiss Soap Company

Sissy's Café
Ulster Tourism

Marlboro
The Falcon

Napanoch
Peter's Market

Port Ewen
April & Co.

Frozen Rainbow
Port Ewen Animal Hospital

Port Ewen Diner
Port Ewen Liquor Store

Port Ewen Pharmacy
Ulster BOCES Port Ewen

White Wolf Restaurant

New Paltz

Cafeteria
Convenient Deli

Dedrick's Pharmacy
Earthgoods

Elting Memorial Library
Fox & Hounds Liquors

Handmade & More
In Good Taste

Inner Wall
Jack's Meats & Deli

Main St. Bistro
Manny's Art Supplies

My Market
New Paltz Agway

New Paltz Chamber of Commerce
Visitors Ctr.

P&G's
Woodland Pond

Plaza Diner
Starbucks

Village Tea Room Restaurant & Bake Shop
The Bakery

The Sanctuary
Minnewaska Lodge

Mohonk Mountain House
Olivebridge

Krumville Country Inn
Tetta's Tire Shop and Convenience Store

Ashokan Center
Windham Resort

Phoenicia
Sweet Sue's

Ricciardella's Restaurant
Phoenicia Supermarket

Arts Upstairs Gallery
Pine Bush

Pine Bush Area Public Library Annex
Hearts and Flowers

STS Tires
Port Ewen

April & Co.
Frozen Rainbow

Port Ewen Animal Hospital
Port Ewen Diner

Port Ewen Liquor Store
Port Ewen Pharmacy

Ulster BOCES Port Ewen
Shokan

Good Stuff Cafe and Inn
Fruition Chocolate

Ragtime Antiques
Hickory Hill Antiques

Stone Ridge
Egg's Nest

High Falls Cafe
Last Bite Cafe

Jack & Luna's
Stone Ridge Wine & Spirits

Emmanuel's Marketplace
Stone Ridge Lodge

Stone Ridge Library
Marbletown Town Hall

Bodacious Bagels and David's Famous Falafel
Davenport Farm Stand

SUNY Ulster
Tannersville

Green Mountain View Inn
Tillson

Postage Inn
Toad Holly Pub

Ulster Park
Headless Horseman

Hayrides
Klyne Esopus Museum
La Mirage Catering
La Roma Restaurant

Wood'n Wheel Family

Fun Center
Rosendale

Bywater Bistro
Market Market Café

Peppino's
Red Brick Tavern

Rosendale Café
Rosendale Library

Rosendale Recreation Center
Rosendale Theatre

The Big Cheese
Saugerties

Diamond Mills
Dutch Ale House Inc.

From Europe to You
Hudson Valley Dessert Company

Inquiring Minds
Bookstore

Krause's Chocolates
Lucky Chocolates

Pig Bar & Grill
Miss Lucy's Kitchen

Mother Earth's Storehouse
Saugerties Antique Center

Win Morrison Realty
Starway Café

Tango Café
Shokan

Good Stuff Cafe and Inn
Fruition Chocolate

Ragtime Antiques
Hickory Hill Antiques

Stone Ridge
Egg's Nest

High Falls Cafe
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Klyne Esopus Museum
La Mirage Catering
La Roma Restaurant

Walkill
Elsie's Place

Walkill Body Shop
Chela's Market

Walkill Public Library
Wawarsing

Pine Bush Library
West Hurley

Westwood Metes & Bounds Realty
Hurley Ridge Fine Wines

Rondout Savings
West Park

Apple Bin Farmers' Market
Global Palate

Lucille's Restaurant
Stonehedge Catering & Restaurant

West Shokan
Olive Free Library

Woodstock
Bank of America

Woodstock Inn on the Mill Stream
Catskill Mtn. Pizza Co.

Tillson

Postage Inn
Toad Holly Pub

Ulster Park

Headless Horseman
Hayrides
Klyne Esopus Museum
La Mirage Catering
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West Shokan

Olive Free Library

Woodstock

Bank of America
Woodstock Inn on the Mill Stream
Catskill Mtn. Pizza Co.
Dharmaware Inc.
Empty Spaces
Gypsy Wolf Cantina
Joshua's Café
Marie's Bazaar
Mirabal of Woodstock
New World Home Cooking
Rite Aid Bradley Meadows Plaza
River Rock Health Spa
The Grove Shop
The Red Onion
Sunflower Natural Foods
Candlestock
Free Style Realty
Westwood Metes & Bounds Realty
Woodstock Music Shop



From the street, BSP looks deceptively small; the entertainment complex actually contains 21,000 square feet.

From preceding page

would be quite interesting to see who they could bring to fill the back."

Dance camps and workshops

Hiring Dunworth, Amari and company to book bands has allowed Rossin to focus more on larger events, as well as the educational component of BSP, which is "where my passion tends to be." In addition to Dance Collective (the professional dance studio), a slew of youth and adult theater, music and dance camps and workshops are offered through the center's nonprofit youth programming arm, Stages in the Arts.

While the various sects of BSP – inhabiting that illusion of a space that stretches a whole city block – may seem like many moving parts for now, the team hopes to bring them together cohesively, much like the way BSP has helped bring Uptown together. It's already happening organically through cross pollination: For example, a group of young parents bringing their children to the Lounge for a Ratboy Jr. show are then exposed to the youth programming of Stages in the Arts, as well as a hip place for them to catch a show of their own the next time they feel like getting a sitter.

"The future is going to see this whole building working together," says Sternstein. ■

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For a full schedule of 50th Anniversary events visit

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photo by John Mizel

