



Mass. Music & Arts Society, 888 South Main St., Mansfield, Mass., 02048 | 508-339-2822 | [info@mmas.org](mailto:info@mmas.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (July 19, 2021)**

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**GROUNDBREAKING INITIATES RENOVATION PROJECT FOR MASS  
MUSIC & ARTS SOCIETY**

MANSFIELD (July 19, 2021) Groundbreaking ceremonies for the Mass Music & Arts Society (MMAS) were held Monday morning, July 19, signaling the beginning of construction of a major renovation project. The ceremony held at the Arts Center at 888 South Main Street in Mansfield included remarks by Board President Brian Johnson, Executive Director Ken Butler, Director of Development Abigail B. Young, Chair of the Construction Committee Scott Ployer, and Artistic Director Dori Bryan-Ployer. Several independent financial donors, sponsors, and Board members were also in attendance.

MMAS purchased the property located along the Mansfield Reservoir across from the Xfinity Center in 2018 with the strategic plan to grow and expand, providing a premier arts experience for all of southeastern Massachusetts.

**Tom Quin**, Board Member and head of the MMAS Finance Committee, credits the financial commitment and strong partnership with BlueStone Bank as the key contributor in helping the organization make their visionary dream for this property a reality. Like many arts organizations, MMAS has also relied on funding for this project through a multi-year capital campaign. DesignLAB architects and Bald Hill Builders are managing the project.

The star of the renovation is the new 100-seat theater, allowing for larger scale productions to be mounted while maintaining the intimate theater ambiance patrons have come to expect from MMAS. The project also includes additional restroom facilities, a new exterior stair with handicap accessible ramp, offices, prop and costume storage, and studio space for the MMAS Academy – the swiftly growing educational arm of the organization managed by Artistic Director, Dori Bryan-Ployer.

**Dori Bryan-Ployer**, present at the groundbreaking, quoted American stage director William Ball in her remarks. “If you’re having a hard time recognizing the value of something, imagine its absence.” Bryan-Ployer continued, “For me, COVID has given us a long stare of what life would be like without the arts. That we are here today, doing this, speaks to the resilience, the passion, and the determination of [Executive Director] Ken Butler, and his insistence not to give up.” Bryan-Ployer went on to thank contributors and donors for their support.

Development Director **Abigail B. Young**, also spoke passionately about her gratitude to the many MMAS donors and sponsors, “We’re simply here because of all of you. I hope you feel the magic of the impact you’re making – a lasting impact – for generations and leaving a legacy to establish the arts here in Mansfield and in Massachusetts, enriching lives of all ages for years and years to come.”

Construction is expected to be completed in October/November of 2021. Outdoor events will continue throughout the summer in a newly erected performance tent (where the groundbreaking was also held). An off-cycle theatrical season in the renovated theater is being planned for January through November of 2022.

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MMAS is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit. For more information, visit [mmas.org](http://mmas.org). MMAS operates the MMAS Black Box Theater, the Morini Art Gallery, and the MMAS Academy for Performing Arts, providing an extraordinarily wide array of artistic programs, performances, and opportunities for both aspiring and experienced performers, artists, and patrons from across the region.

Programs of MMAS are supported with grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the MCC Facilities Fund and the Local Cultural Councils of Mansfield, Attleboro, Foxborough, North Attleborough and Norton.

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### **PHOTO CAPTIONS (\* recommended first)**

*(Photos are named with numbers at end: **MMAS21-Groundbreaking-071921-###**)*

\* **080** Scott Ployer (Building Committee), Dori Bryan-Ployer (Artistic Director), and Ken Butler (Executive Director) reveal the MMAS renovation plan at a groundbreaking ceremony at 888 South Main Street in Mansfield, MA.

\* **101** Donors and Board Members gathered in the MMAS Performance tent on Monday, July 19 for a groundbreaking ceremony signaling the start of a major renovation of their space featuring a 100-seat theater.

**004** Brian Johnson, MMAS President with Gail Hayes, donor, and long-time supporter of MMAS.

**006** Board Members Glenn Fournier and Brian Quinn.

**028** MMAS Volunteers and Board Members Annie Schuster, Shannon Stiles, and Pat McDougal.

**030** Head of the Building Committee Scott Ployer, and Artistic Director Dori Bryan-Ployer.

**031** Board Member Kara Nial, Artistic Director Dori Bryan-Ployer, and Development Director Abigail B. Young.

**039** MMAS Board Member Tom Quin with donors Rory and Beth McGregor.

**040** MMAS Board Member and donor Sandy Levine with donor Arlene Macaione

**045** Executive Director Ken Butler poses with David Loring and Nancy Wall.

**051** Annie Schuster, Evelynne Swaggerty, and Barbara Kogut with donor Gail Hayes.

**128** MMAS Board Members and staff with donor Spier Family Foundation members Greg Spier and Kathy Spier.

**157** MMAS Board and staff members celebrate with DiGirolamo & Sons supporters Ron DiGirolamo and Theresa Nyhan.