

# Local artists call a town hall meeting

## At issue: Protecting community against 'market forces'

by Amy Zimmer / Metro New York

AUG 21, 2007

MANHATTAN. In Patricia Nicholson Parker's ideal world, musicians would play during recess at every school and at soup kitchens.

"It's not just about feeding people's stomachs, it's about their spirits," said Nicholson Parker, executive director of avant jazz organization Arts for Art. She wants to start a movement of city artists and tonight, her newly formed Alliance for Creative Music Action will host a town hall meeting on the Lower East Side to talk about artists' needs in the community and about communities' need for them.

"What is being proposed is much broader than getting a space," Parker said, though real estate is on the agenda. She doesn't believe artists, especially new music and experimental jazz musicians, should be "at the mercy of market forces," and she wants the alliance to pressure the city to provide performance space.

The closure of Tonic in April was a wake-up call for many artists who had seen so many other spaces shutter before. It was one of the clubs Parker would book for the 12-year-old Visions music festival.

On the heels of Tonic's closure, City Councilman Alan Gerson began exploring ways to protect artists and, according to his spokesman Paul Nagle, "We are talking with tax specialists to have something for [Speaker Christine Quinn] and the state by October."

Tax breaks for landlords who rent to nonprofits would ease the burden being passed on to tenants, Nagle said. Another idea is a tax credit for businesses that would get money to musicians. "Something needs to happen soon because New York is losing its competitiveness," he said.

Tonight, Parker anticipates up to 200 people to take part in the meeting, though no elected officials are expected.

In European countries such as Holland, artists get more support, her husband, jazz bassist William Parker, explained. For example, musicians get money for rehearsal space and the government buys paintings.

"For years, musicians — and all artists — have been complaining that when you say you're an artist, people say, 'Why don't you get a real job?'" he said. "Nowadays, you can get a master's degree in music or art, but when you get out of school, you're on your own."

### The details

The Alliance for Creative Music Action town hall will be held at the Clemente Soto Velez Center, 107 Suffolk St., 6 p.m.

[http://ny.metro.us/metro/local/article/Local\\_artists\\_call\\_a\\_town\\_hall\\_meeting/9730.html](http://ny.metro.us/metro/local/article/Local_artists_call_a_town_hall_meeting/9730.html)