

## Josh Gladstone Joins LTV Studios and Will Work To Expand Reach



Josh Gladstone, who has joined LTV Studios as associate producer, with the organization's executive director, Michael Clark. COURTESY LTV

Annette Hinkle on Jan 18, 2023

East End lovers of music, dance and theater may have noticed that in recent months, LTV Studios in Wainscott has become the place to be — and that's no accident.

Though best-known for its role in broadcasting local government meetings and providing community members with resources, expertise and studio space to produce public access television programming, these days, several local organizations are turning to LTV Studios to present in-person programming. Among them are South Fork Performing Arts, The Hamptons Festival of Music, Our Fabulous Variety Show and Neo-Political Cowgirls, all of which have brought live performances to LTV in the past year.

When you think about it, it's a logical collaboration, given LTV's central location near Route 27 and East Hampton Airport, its large, flexible studio spaces that allow for a range of performance options and the dearth of affordable rental spaces on the East End for local nonprofits.

Now, LTV is looking to expand the kinds of offerings that are presented there and to that end, has brought aboard Josh Gladstone, the longtime artistic director of Guild Hall's John Drew Theater, to help shepherd the vision. Gladstone, who retired from Guild Hall a little over a year ago, is the new associate producer at LTV. His job will be to spearhead the production of performing arts programming and community events, something he learned to do quite effectively over his two-decade career at the John Drew Theater and before that, as a founder, with his cousin David Brandenburg, of the Hamptons Shakespeare Festival, which offered outdoor productions in Montauk for four summers beginning in 1996.

LTV's executive director, Michael Clark, who previously owned Crossroads Music in Amagansett, has known Gladstone since at least 2009, when the two produced a concert featuring local musicians to celebrate the last renovation of Guild Hall.

"They were doing a kind of opening week and Josh felt very strongly about making sure there was a community presence with music," Clark recalled in a phone interview with him and Gladstone. "I had been doing some stuff at a local church and coffee houses that Josh had gotten wind of. He said, 'Let's do a day here,' and we did. We ran a gamut of shows all day long for the big kick off of the reopening of Guild Hall. That's where it began for me."

"My memory goes back a little further," added Gladstone. "My son, August, went to learn to play guitar with Paul Chapin at Crossroads every week and Michael was so welcoming and friendly. August still plays the guitar, thanks Michael, and with his promotional work and coffee house music, of course we wanted that at the Drew. So we presented a multi-act, multi-hour show and we sort of annualized it. I think maybe we did five more shows."

Often, those Guild Hall concerts were benefits for specific causes, including one that raised money for an organization that works to end gun violence and was founded in the wake of the Sandy Hook school shooting in 2012.

"We galvanized speakers for social and political organizations and raised money for Moms Demand Action," said Gladstone. "That was really a terrific, well attended important event. Michael and I had a great run together from 2009 to 2019. We were co-producers, working on and off."

So once Gladstone had retired from the Guild Hall in late 2021, Clark knew that he was available for other producing gigs and in late summer, suggested that Gladstone connect with Michael Palmer and Michael Yip, co-founders of The Hamptons Festival of Music, who were producing an inaugural series of three orchestral concerts at LTV this past September.

"I was trying to figure out a new path and they were in need of a production manager for this inaugural series of concerts," explained Gladstone. "They were scrambling and I came in at the 11th hour for them."

Because it was a brand new festival that was bringing in a full orchestra of 40-plus musicians to LTV with fairly quick turnaround, there were quite a bit of moving parts to manage.

"No one knew how it would sound, but it was breathtaking," said Gladstone. "I never saw anyone pull off something like that in my 40 years here. It blew me away."

Pleased with the reception and the venue, The Hamptons Festival of Music has decided to make LTV its home base and, like LTV, has also hired Gladstone as its associate producer. That suits Gladstone just fine and he is happy to produce shows for both organizations.

"East Hampton is our home and we want to stay and keep working here," Gladstone said of him and his wife, Kate Mueth, founder of the performance group Neo-Political Cowgirls. "Kate is now working for Hamptons International Film Festival, I'm working part-time for the music festival and LTV, and Michael [Clark] has given me the opportunity to make this programming happen here. There's a lot happening that never happened here before. Michael has brought a vitality that came in since the pandemic and is only blossoming."

Since his days at Crossroads Music, Clark had jointly produced dozens of episodes of the LTV show "East End Underground," focusing on local bands and their music, and he concedes that when he arrived at LTV as its executive director in fall 2019, he recognized that the studio had a great deal of untapped potential.

"When I got here, I thought there was a lot of underutilized space. I never thought about Josh coming here because I just didn't think with all his experience, that he would even consider it," said Clark.

Gladstone not only considered it, he is excited about the producing possibilities at LTV and is now ready to get down to business, envisioning what might be in store for the several studio spaces, from Studio 3, which, at 3,700 square feet with 40 foot ceilings, is the largest in the building, to the more intimate Studio 5 on the second floor, as well as a podcasting studio and kitchen set. It's not just local groups with an eye on the studios. In terms of commercial rentals, Clark notes that Beyoncé and other stars who prefer not be named have shot at LTV, as has HBO's series "Succession," while musician Roger Waters rehearsed one of his concert tours there.

"The mission on paper stays the same," Clark said of the new vision to expand community programming at LTV. "We have the big studio, it's a source of providing what the community needs. In addition, it generates revenue for us so we can improve the studios with lighting and a big stage, so we'll be able to augment what we get from the town, which is more focused on government meetings, and studio shows which we still will do because we're public access and Altice gives us a grant to do that. It's now become necessary to have someone who can focus on the events. That's something Josh will guide us on."

"It's a work in progress, and there's already some terrific stuff percolating, like South Fork Performing Arts, which is building a following for young people in theater, and Our Fabulous Variety Show, which has come to LTV and found the studios tremendously welcoming," said Gladstone. "So momentum has started and we're going to build on that."

Gladstone has already brought in technical designer Sebastian Paczynski, with whom he worked closely at Guild Hall, to improve LTV's theatrical lighting and staging, not only with an eye on live, in-person shows, but also in terms of the ability to document and record performances for broadcast on LTV's channel 22 or its YouTube channel. He notes that other organizations looking to offer programs at LTV include OLA (Organización Latino Americana) of Eastern Long Island and the Hamptons International Film Festival (HIFF), which is receptive to the idea of educational programming at LTV.

"We can screen films here and highlight student filmmakers with HIFF," said Gladstone, who envisions other, more intimate events like readings of plays, film scripts and even poetry. "We also have a podcast facility and we actually have technicians who are trained to help," he added. "We offer more than you can do at home on your phone. We can support local artists and burgeoning filmmakers. There's much more that can happen."

"It's hard not to draw off Josh's enthusiasm, and that's what I'm happy about," said Clark. "He has so much experience in the business. I'm looking to learn even more. He was the guy in East Hampton who was doing that kind of stuff for the community. Josh's enthusiasm is contagious and has made me start thinking of the different things we can do. He knows what works and that's his strength."

With more organizations starting to come through the door, Gladstone and Clark are finding that LTV is becoming an increasingly attractive option for the area's community groups, especially those that have been struggling in recent years to find affordable rental venues for their performances.

"Sara Jo Strickland at Hamptons Ballet Theatre School is having a difficult time pinning down a space for her programs," said Gladstone. "She doesn't have a consistent performing space. I said, 'You need to revisit LTV.' There are groups that want to dance here. What's stopping them? A good floor on which to dance? There are some who might be willing to put in a good floor. Groups like hers are looking for a place where they can consistently return to and perform for the community. LTV is dedicated to serving artists and groups from the community."

"LTV is poised to reinvent itself," he added.

LTV Studios is at 75 Industrial Road in Wainscott. For more information about LTV Studios, visit [ltveh.org](http://ltveh.org)