



Dear Folly Friends,

The Folly Theater has stood on the corner of 12th & Central since 1900, when it first opened to rave reviews as a burlesque and vaudeville house. Since that time, the Folly has withstood many hardships, including changes in ownership, the 1918 influenza pandemic, world wars, recessions and depressions, the advent of "talking" movies and now, the novel coronavirus. She has weathered them all, and we are excited about the future and the opportunity to once again greet our patrons, and present the world class entertainment for which the Folly is known.

In 2018, the Folly Theater accomplished its Phase I goal of renovating our downstairs lobby, bar and restroom spaces, completely refurbishing our Joan Kent Dillon Lounge, which enhanced our patron experience, and installing a brand new HVAC system. When the Folly went dark on March 8th, our focus had to pivot from moving forward on Phase II of our transformation of the facility to fundraising for our continued mission of preserving and maintaining our beautiful, historic theater. Once we are able to fully re-open and continue our renovation with Phase II, it will include brand new comfortable seats, new carpeting, new stage curtains, a transformation of our upstairs lobby, bar and restrooms and updated backstage areas for artists.

Since March 7th, 2020, we have lost over 60% of our revenue and over 80 events have either cancelled or rescheduled for the future. The coronavirus has impacted all arts

organizations and during this time, we have partnered together in sharing information and becoming creative in order to continue our path towards re-opening our venues as soon as possible in the safest way for our patrons, artists, staff, crew and volunteers.

The year 2020 has been a difficult one for the Folly Theater, as it has been for so many, and we are constantly working towards creative ways to keep the Folly relevant, including the area of racial and gender equality. Our Staff and Board of Directors took this opportunity to address our own diversity issues, and have created a new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy. While the Folly prides ourselves on the diversity of entertainment offerings that we present, we realize that we still have work to do within our organization, and will continue to address that need.

As we celebrate the Folly's 120th Anniversary (September 23, 2020), the Folly is creating new ways to keep in touch, and to present live music at the Folly. Our *Live! from the Lounge* series showcases some of the area's talented artists and gives them an opportunity to perform live in our Joan Kent Dillon Patron's Lounge, creating a cabaret-style concert experience. During the pandemic, videos of these concerts are being streamed on social media for thousands of patrons to experience and enjoy free of charge. Our Young Professional's group, *Encore Club*, continues to thrive and grow, allowing new audiences to experience the Folly Theater.

Now, more than ever, the Folly counts on your support; you are the reason that we continue to strive towards creating transformative experiences. Standing on the Folly stage, Oleta Adams observed that "the walls of the theater still contain the souls of all of the performers that have been here". We look forward to welcoming you once again to our theater for many more special performances.

With heartfelt appreciation,

gou Tarris

Gale Tallis
Executive Director
Folly Theater

FOLLY AWARD RECOGNITIONS!

2020 Silver Stevie Award for Small Nonprofit of the Year, American Business Awards 2020 Gold Philly Award for Short Video (produced by David Swinehart), and 2020 Silver Philly Award for Informative Brochure (designed by Mikaela Garrett), Nonprofit Connect

ARTISTS LOVE THE FOLLY AS MUCH AS AUDIENCES DO!

Artists love to perform at the Folly - because of its intimacy and the proximity of the audience to the stage, which allows the artist to feed off the energy and excitement in the house; because of the rich acoustics; and because of the theater's extraordinary history. Here's what a few artists have said about the Folly:

"The Folly is the best room acoustically I've ever played in anywhere." **Randy Newman**

"I can hear my voice in all the cracks and crevices of this beautiful theater ... you are fortunate to have the Folly Theater in Kansas City." **Rosanne Cash**

"What a fabulous venue. I'm grateful for the sound of it!" Marilyn Maye

"The Folly Theater is the Carnegie Hall of Kansas City." **Sir James Galway**

"Performers truly believe that a theater's walls still contain the souls of all the performers who have been here, and this place" **Oleta Adams**

"It is remarkable for a city to a have a space that is this elaborate and beautiful, and I think we're very lucky to have the Folly Theater." **Calvin Arsenia**

"This is a treasure, and in this space music can speak that it can't anywhere else." "Invariably, artists say this is one of the very best halls they have ever played in."

Cynthia Siebert, President and Founder, The Friends of Chamber Music

"There is no better place in Kansas City in which to experience the power and intimacy of live performance than the Folly Theater." **Bill Shapiro, host of** *Cyprus Avenue*









THE FOLLY THEATER: CELEBRATING 120 YEARS AT THE HEART OF KANSAS CITY

In September 1900, the Standard Theatre, opened its doors on the corner of 12th and Central Streets. This exquisite example of Neo-Renaissance design by Kansas City architect Louis Curtiss became part of an impressive collection of theaters in Downtown Kansas City. The Standard joined the Coates Opera House (10th and Broadway), the Grand Opera House (704 Walnut), the Old Orpheum Theatre (9th and May), and the Convention Hall (13th and Central). Soon to follow were the Willis Woods Theatre in 1902. also designed by Curtiss (11th and Baltimore), the Sam S. Shubert Theatre in 1906 (104 West 10th), and The Garden Theatre in 1912 (13th and McGee).

Curtiss designed the Standard's exterior with a central Palladianmotif window grouping, and outlined the roofline and windows with bare incandescent light bulbs. Thomas Edison first patented his incandescent bulb in 1879, and commercial applications of the bulb began to appear in Kansas City by the mid-1880s. Curtiss also designed a three-foot wide electrified globe, studded with bare bulbs, which he installed on a pole on the southeast corner of the Folly's roof. The globe could be hoisted to top of the pole which could then be seen throughout Downtown - to signify an evening show at the Standard.

In 1900, Kansas City was a bustling economic center, ranking as the

22nd largest city in the country, with a population of 167,732 residents. Dozens of rail lines made Kansas City the crossroads of American commerce and industry. In 1900, Kansas City had become the second largest meat packing center in the country. Lumber, grain elevators, flour milling, farm implements, and banking were also important engines of Kansas City's economy at the turn of the century. By 1900, Kansas City also boasted the third most extensive streetcar system in America.



Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

All of these factors contributed to a vibrant theater scene in Kansas City which was well-patronized by an expanding middle class.

The Standard Theatre went through various ownership and name changes before Barney Allis, owner of the Muehlbach Hotel, acquired the theater in 1941 and renamed it the Folly. During the first half of the 20th century, some of the greatest performers of American theater appeared on the Folly's stage. Humphrey Bogart, Fanny Brice, Shirley Booth, Al Jolson, Pinky Lee, Eddie Foy, Jeanne Engels, the Marx Brothers, Gypsy Rose Lee, and Jack Dempsey all performed here.





(1900, September 16). Kansas City Star, p. 24. Available from NewsBank: The Historical Kansas City Star Between 1941 and 1945, over one million soldiers, sailors and Marines passed through Kansas City, and thousands of them found a few moments of entertainment and distraction at the Folly. Over the years, as vaudeville gave way to burlesque (which gradually gave way to seedier entertainments), the Folly entered a period of decline in the last 1960s and early 1970s.



Brass floor tiles commemorate the many leaders and donors who rescued and restored The Folly in the late 1970s.

Nonetheless, this indomitable "Grand Lady of 12th Street" has withstood the test of time. In 1974, a City permit had been issued for the Folly's demolition, in order to make way for yet another surface parking lot. However, a group of civic leaders and historic preservationists drew a line in the sand and resolved that this beautiful theater must be saved. The Folly stood at the vanguard of the revitalization of Downtown Kansas City. After seven years of painstaking restoration work, the Folly reopened to much fanfare in 1981, and a parade of American and internationally-acclaimed performers - too long to list completely - have graced its stage over the ensuing decades. Performers like the Alvin

Ailey American Dance Theater, Audra McDonald, Arturo Sandoval, Boys Choir of Harlem, Bo Burnham, Ben Vereen, Barbara Cook, Cecilia Bartoli, Joyce DiDonato, Luciano Pavarotti, Yo-Yo Ma, Sir James Galway, Jerry Lee Lewis, Lily Tomlin, Patti LuPone, Oleta Adams, Wynton Marsalis, Kathleen Battle, Itzhak Perlman, Dizzy Gillespie, Juan Diego Flórez, James Earl Jones, Jesse Norman, Joshua Bell, Sir András Schiff, and Gregory Peck, to name just a select few.

Today, the future is bright for the Folly Theater, occupying a unique and important niche in Kansas City's arts and culture ecology. The Folly is the only 1,000 seat performance hall in the region with a proscenium stage and orchestra pit, state-of-the art lighting and sound equipment, full-service box office and lobby bars. The Folly is relatively affordable for smaller and mid-sized arts organizations to entertain their audiences, explore creative new thoughts and ideas, and present new artists. Through both its own presented performance series, and through the productions of its rental clients, the Folly serves nearly 60,000 patrons with over 125 diverse events each year.

Renovations recently completed and planned for the near future, as part of the Folly 2020 Campaign (described in more detail in this report), will help sustain the Folly for future generations.



The Folly Kids' Series brings in the next generation of Folly attendees and patrons.





THE FOLLY 2020 CAMPAIGN: RESULTS AND PROMISE

In 2016, the Folly launched *The Folly 2020: A Campaign* to Secure the Future of the Folly Theater and Expand the Performing Arts. This ambitious five-year project included multiple phases and objectives designed to dramatically enhance the "Folly Experience" for our patrons, and to secure the Folly's financial future.

Enhancing the Folly Experience

The Folly has embarked on a 5-year strategic plan to significantly improve nearly every aspect of the patron's experience at the theater, from the moment they walk into the lobby of this historic jewel box theater, until the curtain raises on a memorable artistic performance. While the Folly is Kansas City's only remaining 19th century theater, our goal is to provide state-of-the-art comfort and technology that enhances the beauty and intimacy of this iconic venue.

Phase I: In 2017 and 2018, the Folly completed the first phase of its capital improvement campaign. This phase included the following components:

- Replace the theater's 40-year-old HVAC system with a state-of-the-art, energy efficient, zoned heating and cooling system;
- Renovate the first floor lobbies, box office, bar, and restrooms to improve traffic flow and space utilization, integrate the two first floor lobbies, and modernize the facilities;
- Renovate the second floor patron lounge (recently named the "Joan Kent Dillon Lounge"), install an elevator to the lounge, relocate the stairway so that it is more accessible, and install a prep kitchen; and



 Dedicate the auditorium as the "C. Stephen Metzler Hall at the Folly Theater."

Total cost of Phase I was \$2.7 million dollars. Major funding for this project was provided by the William T. Kemper Foundation, Commerce Bank, trustee; the Sunderland Foundation; the Hall Family Foundation; the Francis Family Foundation; the Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation; the R.C. Kemper Foundation; the Richard J. Stern Foundation for the Arts; the Marion and Henry Bloch Family Foundation; the Kirk Foundation; the Kansas City, Missouri, 11st Street Corridor TIF Plan Neighborhood Cooperative Improvement Fund; the Miller Nichols Charitable Foundation; the McDonnell Foundation, Inc.; the Courtney S. Turner Charitable Trust; Sally Firestone; Bill and Peggy Lyons; the G. Kenneth and Ann Baum Philanthropic Fund; and over 100 other individuals, businesses and foundations.

Facing page: A visualization of the new mezzanine lobby planned in "Phase II," above details of the current worn flooring, carpet and seats.





Phase II: In 2019, the Folly began planning for the second phase of its capital improvement campaign. Pending successful fundraising for this \$4.1 million endeavor, this phase is planned to include the following components:

- Replace the theater's 1,072 seats with wider and more comfortable seats and standards, while still maintaining the theater's historic aesthetic -
- \sim the current seats are not original to the theater, but are believed to date to the 1940s or 1950s;
- ~ by installing seats that are, on average, two inches wider, the seating capacity of the theater will be reduced to 1,006 (a loss of 66 seats);
- Repair and refinish the original hardwood floorboards on the orchestra level floor;
- Replace the carpet in the auditorium aisles, the main staircase, and the mezzanine lobby;



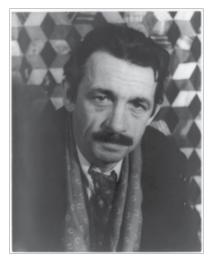
- Renovate the main staircase, the mezzanine lobby and the mezzanine restrooms, including a new bar, lighting, carpet, handrails, fixtures and paint;
- Refresh the theater's four backstage dressing rooms;
- Replace the stage curtain, box seat drapes, and the entry curtains;
- Install reproductions of two Thomas Hart Benton murals in the main lobby (completed in summer, 2020);
- Replace 100-year-old underground plumbing that supplies water to the Folly's fire sprinkler system (completed in early 2019 in response to an emergency rupture of the pipe); and
- Acquire and/or install various upgraded technologies, including a digital projector, stage-light plotting software and hand-held devices, ticket scanners, a new website, and new office computers and operating systems (will be completed by winter, 2020).

Securing the Folly's Financial Future

In addition to the significant capital improvements outlined above, a separate objective of the *Folly 2020 Campaign* was to create a permanent endowment fund which would generate an ongoing stream of annual income to support the operations and bold new initiatives at the Folly. The initial goal was to raise \$1 million for the "Folly Forever" endowment fund, with a longer-range goal of increasing the endowment to \$5 million. As of October 2020, the fund balance for the "Folly Forever Endowment Fund" was over \$1.15 million, with approximately an additional \$50,000 in outstanding multi-year pledges.

THOMAS HART BENTON MURALS INSTALLED IN THE FOLLY LOBBY

The Richard J. Stern Foundation for the Arts,
Commerce Bank, trustee, donated reproductions
of two vibrant Thomas Hart Benton murals which
were installed in the Folly lobby in the Summer of
2020. The originals of these paintings, City Activities
with Subway and City Activities with Dance Hall,
were part of a 10-panel mural cycle called America
Today which the New School for Social Research
commissioned Benton to paint for its boardroom
in 1930. The entire America Today mural cycle was
acquired by AXA Equitable Life Insurance Company
in 1984. In December 2012, AXA Equitable donated
all 10 mural panels to The Metropolitan Museum
of Art. In 2019, The Met granted the Folly permission to



Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Carl Van Vechten Collection, [reproduction number, e.g., LC-USZ62-54231]

acquire and display reproductions of these two murals.

City Activities with Subway is teeming with action-filled vignettes of colorful, bawdy, and raucous entertainments and diversions of the 1920s. The mural also reflects the strains of the era's growing anxiety over moral and financial crises. Inspiration for the standing subway rider was drawn from burlesque star, Peggy

Reynolds. Slapstick comedian, Shorty McAllister, often shared the same burlesque stage with Peggy Reynolds, as he is portrayed in the wings of a striptease act at the far left. As depicted in the upper right corner, boxing was a popular form of entertainment during the Jazz Age, owing largely to the popularity of the Jack Dempsey - Gene Tunney matches of the 1920s. Dempsey boxed on the Folly stage in the mid-1920s.

City Activities with Dance Hall resonates with the colorful heyday of vaudeville at the Folly (then known as the Shubert's Missouri). The mural personifies the evolving social norms and entertainment options of life in America during the 1920s, including the emergence of women's



Sneak peek! Licensing restrictions on the artwork prevent us from showing you more than this. Be sure to admire it in full on your next visit to The Folly.

suffrage, the pulse of the Jazz Age and Prohibition, the growing popularity of moving pictures, and the social strain of industrialization. Benton included a self-portrait in the lower right corner, raising a glass to toast the completion of the mural. To the left of the self-portrait, Benton tenderly portrays his wife, Rita, and their son, in a pose echoing images of the Madonna and Child in Christian art.

Benton was one of the foremost American Regionalist artists. *America Today* was Benton's first significant institutional commission, and elevated his national stature as a leader of the Regionalism movement. In December 1934, he became the first artist ever featured on the cover of *Time* magazine.

Thomas Hart Benton was born in 1889 in Neosho, Missouri, into an influential family of Missouri political leaders. After studying in Chicago and Paris, Benton settled in New York City, where he lived and worked from 1912 to 1935. Benton moved to Kansas City in 1935. He taught at the Kansas City Art Institute from 1935 to 1941. Benton also maintained a studio in his home at 3616 Belleview until his death in 1975. His home and studio are now managed by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources as a state historical site.

America Today: City Activities with Subway, 1930-31

America Today: City Activities with Dance Hall, 1930-31

Reproductions of the original egg tempura and oil paintings at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of AXA Equitable, 2012 (2012.478a-j)

© The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Partnering With Emerging Arts Organizations to Showcase Their Works

The Metzler-Copaken Initiative to Expand the Performing Arts at the Folly Theater was established in 2016 by Bunni and Paul Copaken to celebrate the life and legacy of their good friend, C. Stephen Metzler. Steve was a passionate advocate for the arts, and was instrumental in the revitalization of the Folly Theater. Bunni and Steve were part of a small group of visionary community leaders who met at the Folly Theater in 1984 to help create the Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey, and they continued to serve as board leaders for KCFAA for many of the next 30 years.

The Initiative, now in its 4th year, recognizes the important value of cultivating a diverse array of emerging performing arts organizations, to explore creative new thoughts and ideas, to produce new works, and to provide opportunities for new artists to give voice to their dreams and inspirations. Consequently, the Initiative was established to provide competitive grants to support small and midsized arts organizations by providing an opportunity to: elevate their public profile, expand their audience, develop and showcase the talents of their artists, enhance the production values of their work, and build a stronger

organizational future through performances in the historic Folly Theater.



©2014 Kathy Disney

Grant recipients have included:

Black Repertory Theatre of
Kansas City, Calvary Community
Outreach Network's Helping
Youth Plan for Excellence,
Charlotte Street Foundation's
"Time's Not Listening", City in
Motion Dance Theater, Folk
Alliance's International Folk
Music Awards, The Fringe
Festival, Harmony Project,
Kansas City Chamber Orchestra,
Kansas City Dance Festival,

Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey, Kansas City Women's Chorus, KC Jazz Alive's *Charlie Parker Celebration*, KKFI - 90.1 FM presents "Collaborations Live!", Midwest Chamber Ensemble, and Owen/Cox Dance Group, among others. Several of these grant recipients have produced collaborative performances featuring many different local artists - providing a unique and rewarding opportunity for each of them to perform on the Folly stage before audiences on a scale they could not achieve on their own.

This has been a remarkably successful and rewarding Initiative in so many ways: providing outreach and support to the community, and opening the Folly's doors to diverse, new audiences and arts organizations.

FOLLY THEATER FY20 REVENUES AND EXPENSES

Revenue: Actual vs Budgeted	Shortfall
Programming / Underwriting / Ticket Sale	-6.5%
	-45.9%
Rental Income	
Special Events / Other	-22.8%
Direct Public Support	Increased +6.5%
Expenses: Actual vs Budgeted	Reduction
Programming / Production Costs	-24.4%
Rental Costs	-44.7%
	0%
Salaries/Benefits	
Administrative / General Operations	-28.8%
Facilities and Equipment	-6.6%
Development / Fundraising	-24.6%

The city-wide shutdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation or postponement of over 60 shows and events in 2020. The theater's revenues have fallen significantly, however there has been a nearly commensurate reduction in expenses. Through June 30, 2020, the end of our fiscal year, The Folly has absorbed a net shortfall of \$44,161, or 3.86% of the year's expenses.

The bright spot of this past year has been the strong and increasing support from donors and the public. Direct Public Support was over budget at 106.5%, in recognition of the value placed on The Folly Theater, and confidence in the stewardship of this historic and vital resource by the board and staff of the Folly.

The coming fiscal year will remain challenging due to the continuing nature of the pandemic and the inability for full capacity events to be held indoors. Creativity has a home at The Folly, and we are finding ways to host smaller and lower capacity events. As those expand and our support continues, we are confident of The Folly's bright future.

OUR DONORS SUSTAIN THE FOLLY, AND KANSAS CITY'S PERFORMING ARTS SCENE

LOCKTON COMPANIES

Lockton Companies has been one of the Folly's strongest corporate partners for the past decade, particularly since its Senior Vice President Mark Seely joined the Folly board in 2011 and became one of the leading forces behind the Folly's renaissance. Mark and his husband, Ross Haynes - also a Lockton Senior Vice President - have been champions of the Folly in so many ways over the past decade: as top tier individual sponsors of the Folly Frolic, Picnic, and Golf Classic, as hosts of numerous Folly events in their home, and as recruiters of many Lockton associates and business partners to support the Folly. Mark chaired the successful Light the Lights benefit for the installation of Folly's new marquee sign in 2012, and he co-chaired the first three years of the revived Folly Frolic benefit from 2015 - 2018. Mark served as vice-president of the Folly board in 2015 and 2016, and as board president from 2016 to 2019. During Mark's tenure, Lockton has been one of the Folly's largest annual corporate donors, and we are very grateful for their sustained support.

SOLORIO & AVILA

Ever since Alex Solorio joined the Folly board in 2009, he and his law firm, Solorio & Avila, have been the driving force behind the highly successful Folly Golf Classic now in its 11th year. Alex has chaired or co-chaired this important fundraising event for the past 10 years, and Solorio & Avila has been one of the principal sponsors of this event every year. Created at a time when the Folly had no annual fundraising event to support its general operations, the Folly Golf Classic has generated more than \$500,000 for the Folly over the past decade. Over the years, Alex has hosted dozens of early morning steering committee meetings with coffee and pastries; hosted the margarita station on the course; hosted or co-hosted the scotch and cigar patio at the clubhouse; and donated thousands of dollars worth of in-kind products to support the success of this event. Alex has also introduced scores of business partners, colleagues, and friends to the Folly through this event.

OUR SUPPORTERS AND VOLUNTEERS MAKE IT HAPPEN!



Andy McDonald is one of several of our dedicated Folly volunteers who have been with us since the 1981 re-opening of the theater. Throughout the years, Andy has provided a steady hand to his team, working many different events, from dance recitals and burlesque shows to Harriman-Jewell and Friends of Chamber

Music performances (the last two more in line with his tastes)! When we have our Volunteer Training Sessions for new ushers, Andy provides a history lesson and tour of the theater based on his many years of experience. Andy is from Garnett, Kansas, majored in Spanish and Latin American area studies at KU, graduating Phi Beta Kappa. He started his work career at Kemper Military College in Boonville, Missouri, in the Admissions Department, and then went on to work with UMB Bank in regulatory compliance, and on to H&R Block, where he continued his work in regulatory compliance until his retirement this past spring. His many loves include traveling all over the world; London is his favorite city, and Spain is his favorite country. Andy's other loves are opera, classical music, and thankfully, the Folly Theater! Memorable performances at the Folly for Andy were with Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Jessye Norman and Renee Fleming; he enjoys the sheer magnitude of diverse offerings at the Folly Theater. We are so appreciative of the countless hours that Andy has spent at the Folly, and now having retired from H&R Block, we hope to see him even more!

Cheers to all of our incredible volunteers who are the life blood of the theater!













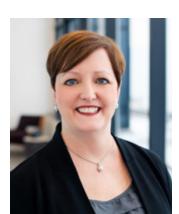












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THE FOLLY THEATER VISION • Enhancing lives through the power of the arts.

THE FOLLY THEATER MISSION • To preserve Kansas City's oldest historic theater as a premier performance venue, we commit to maintain our building's heritage, diversify our program and entertainment offerings, and be an enthusiastic participant in the continuing revitalization of downtown Kansas City.

Folly Staff



Gale Tallis, Executive Director



Kathy Dunn, Fundraising/Grant Consultant



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816-842-5500 12th & Central Kansas City, Missouri



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