



THE FOLLY 2020 CAMPAIGN



PHASE II CASE STATEMENT



PHASE II OF THE FOLLY 2020 CAMPAIGN — Overview

Phase II of the Folly 2020 Campaign is the capstone to a 5-year endeavor to dramatically enhance the patron and artist experience at the iconic Folly Theater.

Phase II will be the most consequential, impactful, and transformational revitalization project undertaken by the Folly in over 40 years.

Phase II will honor and showcase the historic aesthetics of this intimate 19th century theater while bringing the patron experience to contemporary standards of comfort, service and enjoyment.

Our goal is that, from the moment each patron walks through the theater's doors, while they progress through the lobbies and prefunction spaces, and when they sit in their seats, they are immersed in a beautiful, engaging, accessible, and comfortable experience that will enable them to enjoy extraordinary artists on our stage.

*Ultimately, we seek to create exceptionally memorable arts experiences in an ornate, intimate, and historic theater: a unique **"Folly Experience."***



***This Case Statement
describes how we plan
to achieve those objectives...***

THE FOLLY 2020 CAMPAIGN — Background: “What is past is prologue.”

As it grew in population and national prominence, with business and industry flourishing, Kansas City experienced a pivotal year in 1900. Its civic leaders knew that if this was to be a great metropolis, Kansas City would be defined by its cultural offerings, as much as its business, social and educational amenities. The iconic venue now known as the FOLLY THEATER opened that year as the “Standard Theater,” a block north of the new Convention Center – completely rebuilt in just 90 days after a devastating fire, right in time to host the Democratic National Convention. National media first lauded the resilient “Kansas City spirit” that year.

Billed as “the largest and most comfortable” theater in the Great West when it first opened, the Standard prominently incorporated the recently commercialized electric lightbulb. An exquisite example of Neo-Renaissance design by famed architect Louis Curtiss, the front façade features the graceful symmetry of a triple-arched “Palladian” window, offset by matching oculi windows at the gallery level. The performance hall is decorated with ornate plasterwork, classical columns and cameos, and stained-glass chandeliers. Since its original opening, artists and audiences alike have

marveled at the theater’s acoustics, intimacy and ornate design.

Presenting concerts, plays, and other performances in service to the cultural needs of a city that was evolving from a “frontier cow town” into the commercial crossroads of America and the entertainment capital of the Plains, the Folly has been at the vanguard of performing arts in Kansas City for over 120 years – continuing to be a national destination for arts and culture, and holding a unique place in Kansas City’s history. Private ownership of the theater passed through several hands during its first 70 years, including Col. Edward

Butler of St. Louis, the Schubert Organization, Barney Allis, and then a group of New York investors which allowed the neglected theater to fall into a steep decline.

In the 1970s, the passionate act by civic leaders to save the City’s only remaining 19th century theater is now legendary, and underscores the meaning and importance of this

jewel-box cultural treasure. Spared by a court injunction against its planned demolition, no other theater embodies and reflects Kansas City’s rich cultural history, or provides such an elegant and intimate venue for experiencing extraordinary artistic performances.



Anointed by the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, this irreplaceable, iconic theater was painstakingly restored by artisans and craftsman over the course of seven years. Shortly after its grand re-opening in 1981, Sir James Galway aptly described the Folly as **“Kansas City’s Carnegie Hall.”**

Yet, as time passes – and as more than 3 million patrons have come through her doors in the past 40 years – the stewardship of the Theater demands rigorous and continual evaluation. Temporary “fixes” and deferred maintenance have placed the Theater in a position of “losing ground,” in terms of patron satisfaction and competitive advantage, rather than maintaining the international reputation

she has earned from artists and audiences alike as one of the nation’s finest, intimate, acoustically superior performance halls.

It was in response to these challenges that, in 2016, the Folly’s leadership launched The Folly 2020: A Campaign to Secure the Future of the Folly Theater and Expand the Performing Arts. This ambitious six-year project includes multiple phases and objectives designed to dramatically enhance the extraordinary “Folly Experience” for our patrons and the artists who perform on our stage, add to the City’s growing reputation as a cultural destination, and secure the Folly’s financial future.



Enhancing the Folly Experience – Phases I and II

Phase I: Successfully Completed in 2018

The initial focus of the **Folly 2020 Campaign** by necessity was replacement of our HVAC system on the brink of total failure, and critical first-floor improvements to the Theater's patron service areas. Phase I included:

- Replacement of a 40-year-old HVAC system with a state-of-the-art, energy efficient, zoned heating, cooling and ventilation system;
- New ADA-compliant restrooms; renovation and integration of the first floor lobbies, box office, and bar/concession area to improve traffic flow and space utilization; and modernization of the first floor patron facilities;
- Renovation of the second floor patron lounge, recently named the "Joan Kent Dillon Lounge;" and
- Installation of an elevator to the patron lounge in order to make it more accessible.

Total cost of Phase I was \$2.7 million. 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, 11th 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.

Phase I - 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 programmatic 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 April 2021, the fund balance for the "Folly Forever Endowment Fund" was \$2.47 million, with approximately \$50,000 in outstanding multi-year pledges.



Phase II – Completion of Full Theater Renovations to 21st Century Standards: 2021–2022

The patron and the artist are two critical guiding stars for Phase II of the **Folly 2020 Campaign**. Research shows it is highly likely that patrons will remember “the experience” of attending a performance at the Folly. The Theater’s 5-year strategic plan focuses deliberately on the improvement of nearly every aspect of the patron’s experience – from the moment one walks into the lobby of this historic theater, until the curtain rises on a memorable artistic or entertainment performance. Though we faithfully steward an historic structure, our goal is to provide state-of-the-art comfort and technology that enhances the beauty and intimacy of this iconic venue and the extraordinary performances which unfold on her historic stage.

The #1 patron criticism of the Folly for many years has been the condition of performance hall seating, in terms of both comfort and state of repair. Though not original to the theater, the 1,078 seats in the hall are over 80 years old. These seats are 2 to 3 inches more narrow than today’s industry-standard seat size, they lack the comfort of contemporary seat padding, and they are becoming increasingly difficult to repair when arm-rests and seat backs break or fall off. Replacement of the seating, seating standards, and aisle lighting throughout the Theater is a key goal in Phase II of the Campaign.

In order to remain viable in an increasingly competitive arts and cultural marketplace, it is critically important that the Folly consistently deliver uniquely memorable, exceptional, and rewarding arts experiences to our patrons. We must provide a positive, engaging “processional experience” from the moment each patron walks through the Folly’s doors, through the

lobbies, up the main staircase, and into their seats. Ticketing and concession services must be delivered smoothly and effectively, fixtures and amenities must be attractive and well-maintained (not broken and worn out), and there must be a warm and welcoming ambiance that creates the belief that they are in a “special place” where they are about to experience exceptional, beautiful artistry.

PHASE II – Desired Outcomes

- 1 Enhance every patron’s “Folly Experience” with wider, more comfortable seats.
- 2 Refresh and reinvigorate the “Folly Experience” by replacing worn and repair-weary carpeting, stage curtain and drapes that are beyond their useful life.
- 3 Increase the functionality and appeal of the mezzanine lobby with new restrooms, full-service bar, and updated fixtures and furnishings.
- 4 Integrate the Phase I and Phase II renovations to create a seamless, engaging experience as patrons progress from the front door to the box office and concession area, through the lobbies, and into the performance hall.
- 5 Refresh dressing rooms and backstage areas to comfortably accommodate exceptional artists as they prepare to deliver memorable artistic performances.
- 6 Highlight the iconic architecture of the exterior façade and showcase both the theater’s vital place in Kansas City’s cultural history and its continuing role as a regional arts and cultural tourism destination.

In comparison, the artist knows a great hall as a “partner” in a memorable concert or event. Multiple nationally and internationally renowned artists have praised the history, intimacy and acoustics of the Folly’s performance hall. However, engaging, comfortable dressing rooms enhance the experience of the artists, which leads to a better reputation for the Folly among performers. Our increasingly worn and dated dressing room areas – which have received very little attention in the past 40 years – compromise the Folly’s ability to meet exacting artistic needs, and our goal to enhance Kansas City’s reputation as a worthy destination and performance opportunity for any artist.

Through our successful completion of Phase I of the *Folly 2020 Campaign*, we have demonstrated our ability to steward the resources entrusted to us for the revitalization of the Folly’s first floor lobbies,

restrooms, box office and concession area; Patrons’ Lounge; and HVAC system. We carefully harmonized the historic integrity of this iconic, 19th century theater with engaging amenities that enhance the patron experience. We now seek to complete the task of re-invigorating the “Grand Lady of 12th Street,” and integrating these improvements with the work begun during Phase I.

PHASE II – Project Components

In 2019, the Folly began planning for Phase II of its capital improvement campaign with PGAV Architects. Pending successful fundraising for this \$4 million endeavor, Phase II will include the following components, prioritized based on the progression of the Patron Experience inside the performance hall; the Patron Experience getting to the performance hall; and the Artist Experience backstage:

- **Theater Seating.** Replace the theater's 1,078 seats with wider and more comfortable seats and standards, while still maintaining the theater's historic aesthetic –
 - the current “Shubert-style” seats are not original to the theater, but are believed to date to the 1920s or 1930s;
 - 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); and
 - by installing new, historically-appropriate standards (the end-caps of each row of seats) with enhanced, low-voltage LED lights which improve aisle lighting at lower cost;
- **Orchestra Flooring.** Repair and refinish the original hardwood floorboards on the orchestra level floor. Removing the current seats, and replacing them with wider ones, makes plugging holes and refinishing of the hardwood floor a necessity. After 40 years of wear, the floor boards need to be sanded, repaired, stained, and re-sealed to preserve them for future generations;
- **Carpeting.** Replace the 40-year old carpet in the auditorium aisles, the main staircase, and in the mezzanine lobby. The carpet is fraying and showing wear in several high-traffic areas;
- **Upgrades to main staircase, mezzanine lobby and restrooms.** These upgrades will integrate successfully the renovations from Phase I and the main floor lobbies through the mezzanine lobby and patron service areas. These improvements will also create a more functional, appealing and engaging balcony lobby and bar, which will enhance the versatility of this space for special events and receptions, as well as enhancing the experience of concert patrons;
- **Refresh four backstage dressing rooms.** These rooms are key to artistic hospitality and comfort before, during and after a performance – and their long-overdue improvement will enhance the Folly's

(and Kansas City's) reputation among nationally and internationally renowned artists as a worthy performance destination;

- **Curtains.** Replace the 40-year old stage curtain, box seat drapes, and the entry curtains, all of which have become worn and some of which have sustained multiple tears and repairs (if these curtains and drapes, which are already past their useful life, were not replaced, they must all soon be removed, cleaned and treated with new fire-retardant material, which is an ill-advised investment, in light of their age and condition);
- **Install colorful, engaging reproductions of two Thomas Hart Benton murals in the main lobby** to highlight the theater's cultural connection to the City's vibrant past and to showcase Kansas City's connections to the internationally acclaimed artist at the forefront of the Regionalism movement;
- **Fire Sprinkler System water supply line.** Replace 100-year-old underground plumbing that supplies water to the Folly's fire sprinkler system (emergency work completed in early 2019); and
- **Technology upgrades.** Various upgraded technologies for the Theater (high-resolution digital projector, lighting design software and controls, and ticket scanners) administrative office needs (new server and work stations completed in Summer 2020), and website (anticipated completion in Summer 2021).
- **Assorted.** Outdoor lighting to showcase the historic architecture of the theater, Street-level showcase repairs, digital presentation of Folly/Kansas City history timeline in lobby area, and lobby artwork installations. Among the artwork to be re-installed is an original bronze sculpture created by regionally-acclaimed artist Ed Dwight. Dwight grew up in Kansas City, Kansas; his father played for the Kansas City Monarchs; and he was selected as NASA's first African American astronaut trainee in 1962. This 6 foot by 6 foot whimsical assemblage of various musical instruments, commissioned by the Folly in 1988 (with a grant from patron Vera Patton), had been installed in the patron lounge, but had to be removed in connection with the Phase I renovations.

Conclusion

As a baseline for the Five Year Strategic Plan adopted in 2020, the Folly board of directors articulated the following strategic vision statement:

*The Folly Theater turns 125 in 2025. With the work and success of the **Folly 2020 Campaign**, we are laying the groundwork to raise the reputation of the Folly to that of a premier regional arts and cultural tourism destination, similar to Carnegie Hall in New York, and Ryman Auditorium in Nashville. To achieve this vision, we will focus our attention on three strategic objectives:*

- 1) enhance the uniquely intimate “Folly experience” through historically-appropriate renovations to the performance hall, main staircase, mezzanine lobby and restrooms, and dressing rooms;*
- 2) develop the financial and personnel resources necessary to enrich and expand both the diversity and number of artistic performances presented in the Theater, including both the auditorium and lounge; and*
- 3) invest more resources in effectively marketing, communicating and engaging diverse communities in the Folly’s creative programming and unique niche in Kansas City’s arts ecology.*

*Partnerships with leaders in our community, who have helped the Folly serve this city and region for 120 years, will see the Theater to these worthy ends. Each of the more than 60,000 people who come to the Folly each year will benefit for years to come from the results of these projects, together with a legion of artists – from young rising stars to celebrated international artists – who delight in experiencing extraordinary artistic moments that inspire them and capture their imaginations in Kansas City’s Folly Theater. This is the culmination of the **Folly 2020 Campaign**, creating the “Folly Experience” that serves, inspires and sustains.*



PGAV Designs, Renderings, Graphics



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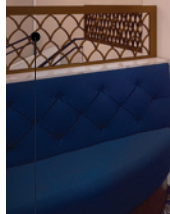
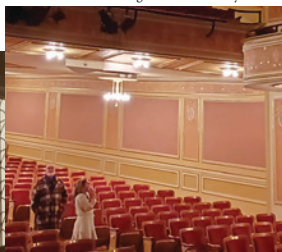
PGAV Designs, Renderings, Graphics



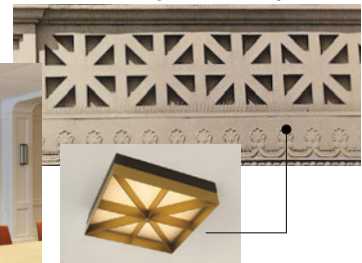
Existing Trim Inside Folly Theater



Existing Window At Folly Theater



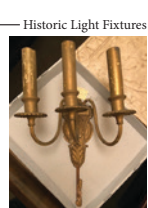
Existing Paneling In Patron's Lounge



Square Motif At Existing Exterior Trim



Proposed Light Fixture



Historic Light Fixtures



Scalloped Motif Inside Folly Theater