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Folly Theater to Utilize Spencer Fane Charitable Grant to Further Broaden DEI of Americana Series

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Spencer Fane LLP is pleased to announce the historic Folly Theater as the recipient of the firm's 2022 Charitable Giving Program grant in Kansas City.

The \$50,000 grant will be paid out over the course of three years. The Folly Theater plans to use the funding to support a continual effort to provide equitable and inclusive opportunities to a broad range of Americana musicians who represent the diverse citizenry of the Kansas City metro and surrounding communities with specific plans to invest in the Folly-Bridge Americana Series. The Folly is also home to the Folly Jazz Series, Kids' Series, Folly Frolic and local listening room series LIVE! In the Lounge.

"We are committed to developing our Americana Series to reflect the rich tapestry of diverse artists whose music tells the unique stories of American lives through roots, folk, country, soul, blues, gospel, jazz and rock music. It is incredibly important to us that this Series reflects and celebrates the full diversity of the cultures, perspectives, and life experiences which comprise our great country," Folly Theater Executive Director Rick Truman said. "We are exceedingly grateful for this opportunity to partner with Spencer Fane in serving the artistic needs of our community with appealing, affordable, and engaging performances that reflect our increasingly diverse audiences and represent what Americana means. This partnership will help the Folly's placemaking initiative, by which we seek to create a venue in which all people, from every corner of our community, feel welcomed, included and a sense of belonging."

The Folly Theater relies on several key community funders who have continued to support the organization through the years due to demonstrated success in achieving goals. Spencer Fane has a deep history of support for the Folly, going back to the relationship of late name partner Richard Spencer, other attorneys, and clients involved with the theater's operations.

In addition to its ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, the Folly Theater will soon embark on the \$4 million Phase II of its renovation plans, which include installing new, more comfortable theater seating, refurbished original wood floors, new carpeting, new lighting, enhanced and updated dressing rooms for the world-class artists, and an updated balcony lobby to enhance the patron experience.

In 2017, Kansas City earned designation as a "City of Music" from UNESCO, the United Nations cultural organization that promotes "creative cities" around the globe. This remains the only city in

the United States with this designation, and as a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, Kansas City has a unique opportunity to continue national leadership on sustainable development and to integrate the arts into the development of the city. The Folly Theater is an active participant in pursuing these initiatives and the receipt of this grant will further along the theater's commitment.

"Spencer Fane stands with the Folly Theater in its dedicated efforts to maintain the building's heritage, diversify the programming and entertainment offerings, and engage in the continued revitalization of downtown Kansas City," said Julia Vander Weele, Office Managing Partner for Spencer Fane in Kansas City. "We are thrilled to provide financial support in addition to patronage and volunteer opportunities from firm leadership, attorneys and legal professionals who have an interest in the dynamic and engaging local arts community."

The Spencer Fane Charitable Giving Program in Kansas City provides significant support to select local nonprofit arts organizations through a \$50,000 donation over three years. The program is designed as a rotation so that one new recipient enters the program each year, with another exiting upon completion of its three-year cycle. Current and past recipients include Midwest Music Foundation, Charlotte Street Foundation, Crossroads Preparatory Academy, Lyric Opera Kansas City, Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey, Heart of America Shakespeare Festival, ArtsKC-Regional Arts Council, and Kansas City Art Institute.

The program's primary goal is to encourage long-standing relationships with nonprofit organizations and provide Spencer Fane employees with additional opportunities to become involved with the firm's charitable causes.

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