



2022 FOLLY THEATER COMMUNITY REPORT

Dear Folly Friends,

Summer 2022 was an exciting time at the Folly Theater. The building was buzzing with carpenters, electricians, plumbers, and tradespeople giving the Grand Lady of 12th Street her most significant facelift in over 40 years. Now, after a \$4.25 million investment and countless hours of painstaking work, audiences and artists can enjoy 21st century upgrades and technology, all while enveloped in rich Kansas City history.

Perhaps more exciting than the work this summer was the stillness. After hours, the theater stood proud but empty, awaiting her new seats, carpet, wood flooring, and drapes. What emerged from that stillness was simple but powerful: possibility.

In the stillness, the possibility of a world-class Jazz musician reaching new artistic heights in front of smart and appreciative Kansas City audiences emerged. In the stillness, the possibility of an elementary student expanding their world view by experiencing the wonder of live theater for the first time emerged. In the stillness, the possibility of a theater goer seeing themselves represented on stage, perhaps for the first time, through the Folly's diverse programming emerged. A theater is not its seats, carpet, flooring, and drapes, although those are important to facilitating a high-end experience. A theater is the life inside it.

When the Folly opened in 1900, her façade was adorned with electric light bulbs, showcasing how "everything's up to date in Kansas City." Her roof was even festooned with a ball of lights that shone brightly on performance nights. Today, the Folly shines brightly as a beacon of artistic integrity where audiences of all ages, colors, beliefs, backgrounds, and life experiences see themselves in the seats and on the stage.

Kansas City Artist Ron Megee astutely observed, "You walk inside the Folly and you see the grandness of it all, and you realize there was a time when people loved the arts so much they built temples to them." Today, audiences will walk into the Folly, see how that grandness has been carefully and expertly refreshed, and know that love still exists today. For this "temple" is a shared, sacred space where we laugh, cry, imagine, applaud, and experience possibility. Together. As a community.

Thank you to our donors, subscribers, ticket buyers, and volunteers who make this possibility happen. You helped transform the Folly into a premier 21st century performing arts venue. You are the reason we are still here, after 122 years, providing thought-provoking, soul-stirring artistic experiences. You are the reason we lovingly care for Kansas City's only surviving 19th century theater. And you are the reason we will continue to do so.

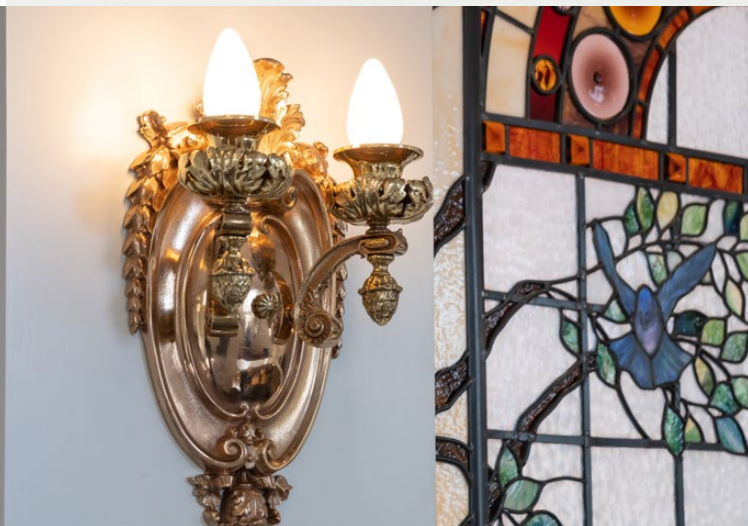


With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rick Truman".

Rick Truman
Executive Director
Folly Theater

On the cover, "Reflections on Louis Curtiss", Kathy Barnard Studio, Installed in the Balcony Lounge, Gift to the Folly Theater from Laura and Reuben Perin, 2022. The restored sconces flanking the bar are original to the Folly.



SUPPORTING KANSAS CITY'S ARTISTIC FUTURE

Created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the *LIVE! In The Lounge* Series provides valuable opportunities for local, Kansas City-based artists to perform in the Folly's Joan Kent Dillon Lounge for intimate audiences. Today, we continue to feature diverse artists in this listening-room concert environment, allowing audiences to experience the sounds and stories of Kansas City's multicultural musical landscape. Here's what previous *Lounge Series* artists said about their experiences:

“To be selected to perform as an artist in the Lounge Series is the dream becoming reality. Here in Kansas City, we take for granted the Folly. This is not the case with musicians and music lovers across the world. This is evident by the fact that my fellow band members in BoskSoul drove from Philadelphia and Nashville to play our set. What began as a dream, became a reality.”

Charlie Harris



“The Series allows artists like myself and others a space for the art to be heard in its purest form - to be intimate with the audience and the community about themselves and their music. This series is within the fabric of Kansas City's affluent art and music scene and continues to show why having a platform is essential for growing music strategies, educating the community and students, and developing partnerships in the Kansas City metro area.”

Amber Underwood



LIVE! In The Lounge on January 15, 2021, featuring Talya Groves.

FOLLY FANS AND FOREVER ADVOCATES

Throughout its 122-year history, the Folly has welcomed notable performers and entertainers. Exceptional artists including Yo-Yo Ma, Pearl Bailey, Esperanza Spalding, Rosanne Cash, and Jon Batiste have filled the stage with their musical talents. The theater isn't known just for its performances, but the entire experience made possible by Folly staff, volunteers and advocates. In 2022, we honored two trailblazers, whose behind the scenes preservation



efforts and dedication to the Grand Lady of 12th Street made the Folly more than a theater venue, but a world-class artistic experience.

Theater expert and community activist **Joan Kent Dillon** saved the Folly Theater from the wrecking ball in 1974, alongside William Deramus III. Dillon envisioned a new life for the neglected theater and rallied community

members to revive the historic Folly to her original grandeur. Dillon, Deramus III, and other community leaders resurrected the once dormant Performing Arts Foundation of Kansas City to carry out the restoration project and raise funding. After seven years and millions in raised funds, the Folly was poised to begin its next chapter with building updates including an additional annex and shareholder's room.

In early March 2022, the Folly renamed the Shareholder's Room the "**Joan Kent Dillon Lounge**" in honor of Dillon's commitment to make Kansas City a first-rank center for the arts. Today, the Joan Kent Dillon Lounge is home to the Folly's *LIVE! In The Lounge Series*. We are proud to carry on Dillon's mission by featuring diverse, local performing artists and support Kansas City's broad spectrum of talent.



Joan Hubbard started serving as a Folly Theater volunteer in 1983. Her love and dedication to the Folly and Kansas City community was evident through her work as a greeter, usher, and longtime Volunteer Coordinator. As the spearhead for the Folly volunteer corps, Hubbard scheduled volunteers for hundreds of performances, tracked volunteer hours, and led

recruitment efforts. Hubbard also believed in the power of the performing arts. Upon her passing, she left the Folly Theater a bequest of \$1.37 million to the Folly Endowment Fund, helping to ensure the Grand Lady can inspire future generations through the arts.

In March 2022, the Folly hosted a "Celebration of Life" to honor Hubbard's legacy and dedicate the main entrance as the "**Joan Hubbard Lobby**."

From giving the theater a new life to creating a warm, inviting atmosphere, both raised the Folly's status. Today, the Folly lights sparkle brighter thanks to their efforts.



PASSING THE TORCH

After 11 years at the helm of the Folly Theater, **Gale Tallis** retired as Executive Director on January 15, 2022. On January 24, Kansas City-native and lifelong resident Rick Truman assumed the position, bringing more than 30 years of industry experience.

Gale left the Folly having booked hundreds of musical acts, established a growing \$2.5 million endowment, and led the charge for a new theater marquee, lighting up the Kansas City skyline for years to come. Over the past four years, Gale led the planning and completion of the Folly 2020 Capital Campaign - Phase I, which renovated first-floor lobby areas and the Joan Kent Dillon Lounge. Before her departure, Gale advocated and led key planning and fundraising efforts for Phase II of this transformational "facelift." Along with numerous accomplishments, her leadership of the Folly helped establish her legacy as a pillar in Kansas City's cultural tapestry.

And so, the torch is passed to **Rick Truman**. From 2003 to 2021, Rick served as Managing Director of Quality Hill Playhouse. Rick holds a Master's in Public Administration from the Bloch School of Business and Public Administration at UMKC and a Bachelor of Fine Arts with an emphasis in acting and directing from Avila University. In addition to his experience in nonprofit arts management, Rick performed or stage-directed at many local theaters, including the Kansas City Repertory Theater, Musical Theater Heritage, Spinning Tree Theatre, Quality Hill Playhouse, Coterie Theatre, Unicorn Theatre, and Civic Opera Theater, with whom he was fortunate to perform on the Folly Theater stage. An avid marathon runner and diehard Royals fan, Rick resides in the Waldo area with his husband, Jerry.

The Folly Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and patrons extend sincere gratitude to Gale for keeping the Folly legacy alive. We welcome Rick and his vision for the organization as we enter the next chapter in the Grand Lady of 12th Street's storied history.



“WHAT’S OLD IS NEW AGAIN”: THE FOLLY 2020 CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The Folly Theater provides a performance experience like none other. Known for its ornate architecture, intimate feel, and supreme acoustics, the Folly serves as a premier medium-sized performance hall exhibiting history, glamour, and the best of the performing arts.

After more than a century of world-class entertainment, the Folly embarked on a 5-year strategic plan - *The Folly 2020 Campaign* - to secure the future of the theater and expand its influence on the performing arts. Ensuring the Folly’s viability among an increasingly competitive arts and cultural marketplace motivated us to make critical and necessary improvements to patron and artist comfortability.

The Folly completed **Phase I** of its capital improvement project in 2018. The \$2.7 million Phase I included replacing the HVAC system; renovating the second-floor Joan Kent Dillon Lounge, first-floor Joan Hubbard Lobby, box office, concession area, and restrooms; and installing an elevator to the Joan Kent Dillon Lounge. Phase II planning began in 2019 with anticipated construction to begin in 2020 before the COVID-19 pandemic delayed progress. This delay resulted in a 10% increase in construction, labor, and material costs. Successful project development restarted in November 2020 as we collaborated with PGAV Architects and McCownGordon Construction to create project estimates and outline the construction timeline.

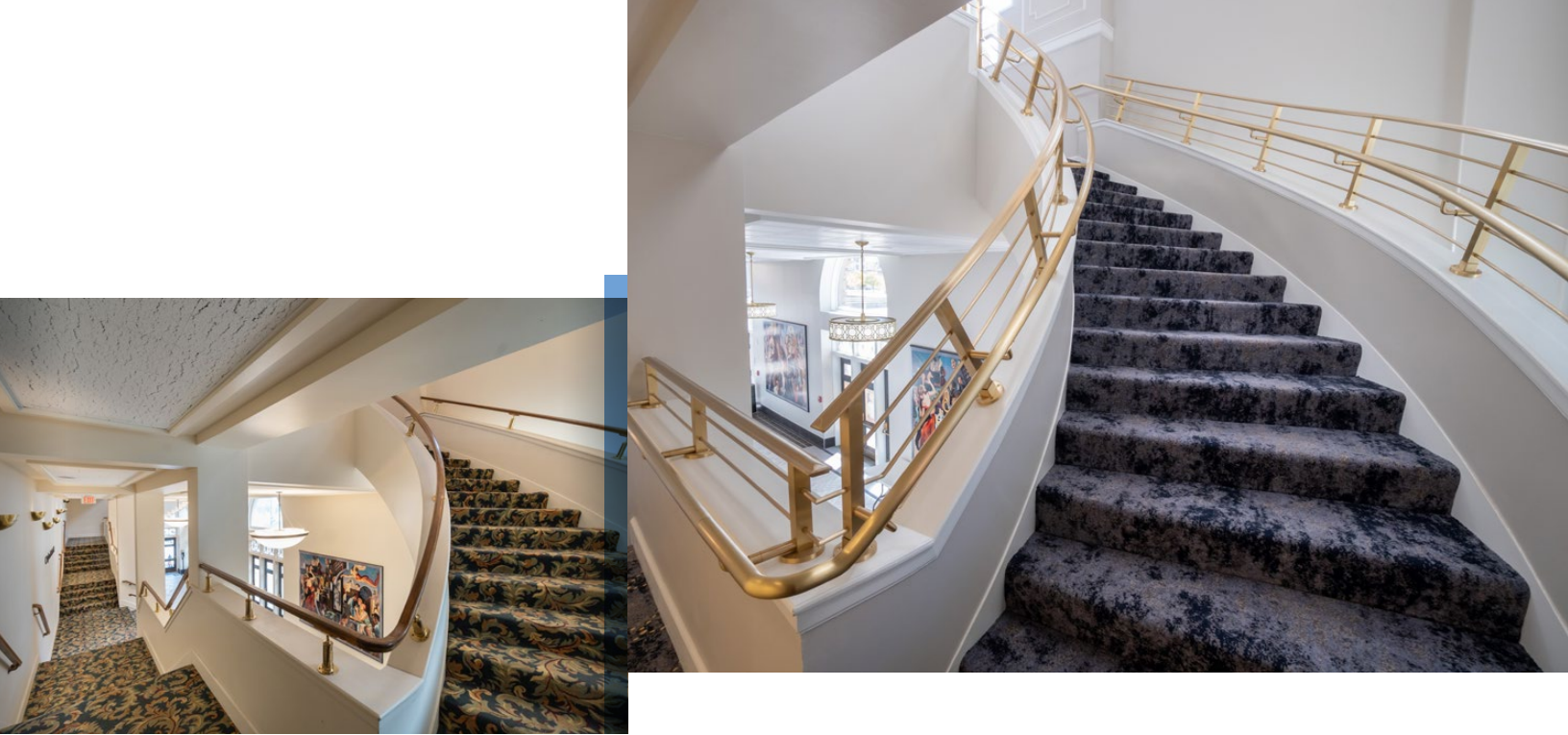
Phase II project construction began on July 5, 2022.

After 14 weeks of construction, the Folly Theater reopened in October 2022, completing the most consequential, impactful, and transformational revitalization undertaken by the Folly in over 40 years. This phase included the following components:

- Replace all 1,078 seats in the theater with wider, more comfortable seats while maintaining the theater’s historic aesthetic. The seating capacity of the theater shrank to 1,005 seats with the installation of seats that are, on average, two inches wider.
- Replace and finish the 122-year-old hardwood floorboards on the orchestra level. Our intention was to repair the original floorboards, but upon examination, our general contractor determined the floor could not be salvaged with the installation of new theater seats.
- Replace the 22-year-old stage curtain, box seat drapes, and entry curtains. The curtains reflect the Folly’s new, rich, navy-blue color palette, along with the improved seating.
- Replace the carpet in the C. Stephen Metzler Hall, main staircase, and Balcony Lounge.
- Create a more functional, appealing, and engaging Balcony Lounge with new lighting, handrails, paint, fixtures, modernized restrooms, and a new bar.
- Reinstall a bronze sculpture of musical instruments by Kansas City native Ed Dwight in the Balcony Lounge. The sculpture, commissioned in 1988, previously resided in the former Shareholder’s Room, which is now the Joan Kent Dillon Lounge.
- Install custom stained-glass artwork by Kansas City based artist Kathy Barnard behind the new Balcony Lounge bar.
- Reinstall reproductions of two Thomas Hart Benton murals in the Joan Hubbard Lobby.

Continues...







“WHAT’S OLD IS NEW AGAIN” ...continued.

- Refresh the Folly’s backstage dressing rooms and hallways.
- Upgrade C. Stephen Metzler Hall technology including a high-resolution digital projector for performances, stage-light plotting software, and microphones to elevate the performance experience for artists and audiences.
- Install HD digital monitors behind the orchestra level bar, box office, and in the Joan Hubbard Lobby.
- Create and implement an interactive digital timeline in the Joan Hubbard Lobby and Folly Theater website sharing the Folly legacy with future generations. Expected completion date is June. 2023.
- Replace 100-year-old underground plumbing that supplies water to the Folly’s Sprinkler system (completed in 2019)
- Install various upgraded technologies, including Wi-Fi boosters throughout the theater and lobby areas, and assistive listening technology.
- Dedicate the Shareholder’s Room as the Joan Kent Dillon Lounge. Dedicate the orchestra lobby as the Joan Hubbard Lobby.





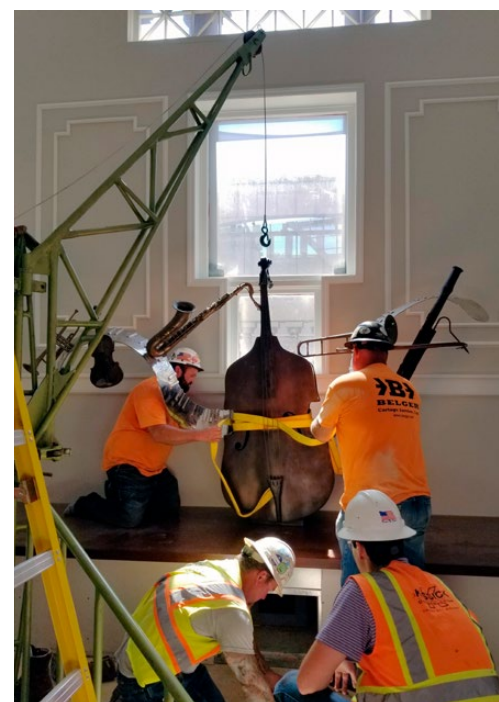
Phase II cost \$4.2 million dollars. The Folly thanks its funders who helped make this project possible. Major funding for this project was provided by:

The Sunderland Foundation
Hall Family Foundation
11th Street Corridor Neighborhood Improvement TIF Fund
Bebe and Crosby Kemper Foundation for the Arts
- UMB Bank, Trustee
William T. Kemper Foundation
- Commerce Bank, Trustee
Richard J. Stern Foundation for the Arts
- Commerce Bank, Trustee
Marion & Henry Bloch Family Foundation
Miller Nichols Charitable Foundation
Missouri Arts Council, a state agency, and the State of Missouri
Annette & Sam & Jack Swirnberg Charitable Foundation
- Bank of America, N.A., Trustee
Laura and Reuben Perin
Libby and Tim Metzler
Sally Firestone
Michael Waterford
Joan J. Horan
Jean and Don Wagner
Linda T. Watson Family Foundation
The McDonnell Foundation, Inc.
John and Marny Sherman
JoAnn and Bill Sullivan
Kathy Feist Vescovi

and over 400 other individuals, businesses, and foundations.

The Folly's reopening presents the opportunity to recommit to the original pledge set forth by the Performing Arts Foundation of Kansas City in 1981 - "to bring a broad spectrum of performing arts events to Kansas City." During what is sure to begin another momentous period for the Folly, we aim to build on this pledge. We seek to bring together diverse artists and communities to experience inspiring arts performances in a comfortable, accessible, and engaging performing arts venue.

We know the arts are integral to the best in humanity and to the best of communities. With the completion of The Folly 2020 Capital Campaign, the "Grand Lady of 12th Street" is more equipped than ever to enhance lives through the performing arts. Now, we invite you and our community to rediscover the magic of the Folly for yourself - **what's old is new again.**





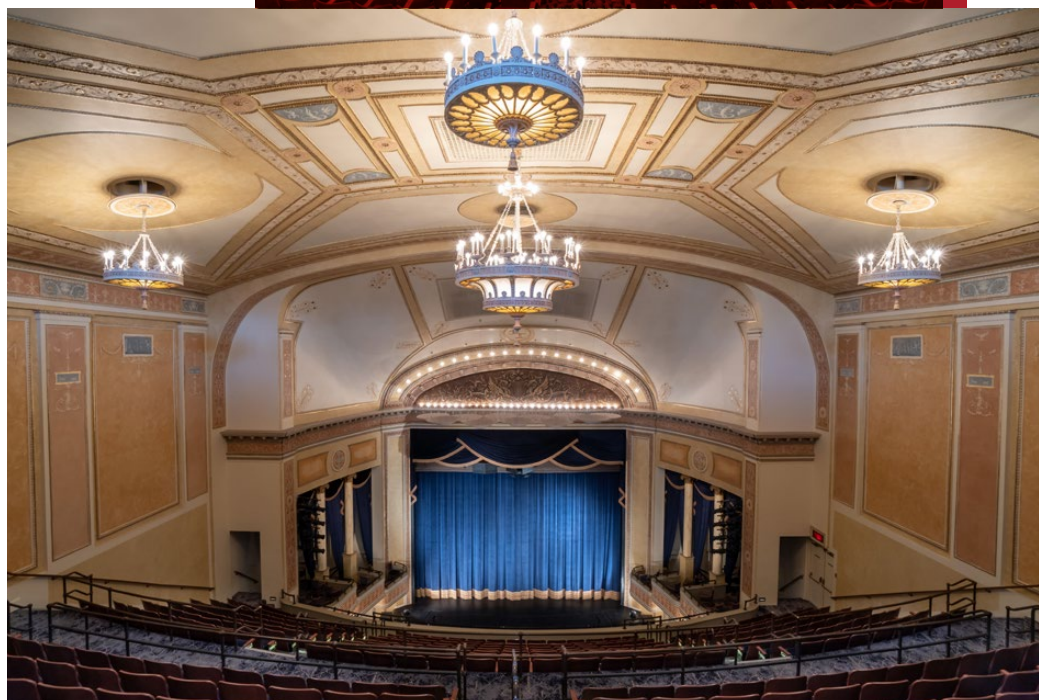
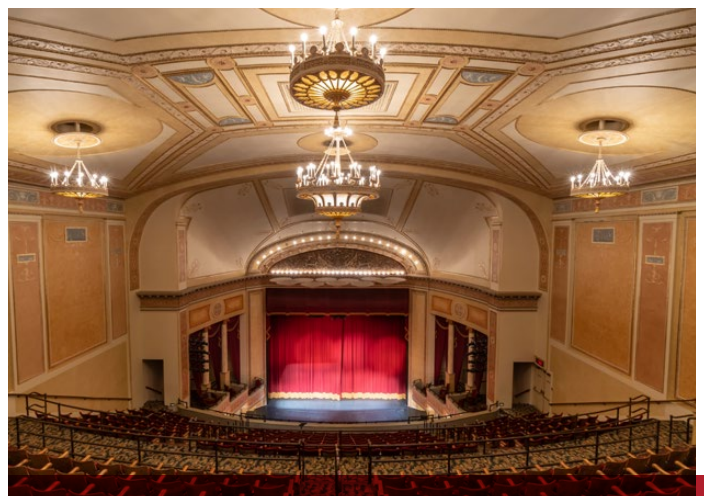
COMING BACK STRONGER

Twenty-twenty was intended to be a monumental year for the Folly. That is until a global pandemic halted operations and Phase II of the Folly's much-anticipated capital campaign. Limited performance opportunities sharply curtailed earned revenue and expenses in fiscal year 2021. Even with a change in operations, the Folly ended FY21 with a \$1,537,174 positive change in net assets, due in part to a \$1.37 million bequest and COVID relief grants.

In September 2021, the Folly was one of the first performing arts organizations to safely present live performances. Audiences were slow to return, and client bookings remained limited, creating an estimated 21.6% net shortfall in fiscal year 2022 programming revenue.

Philanthropic support improved the Folly's fiscal year 2022 financial results (ending June 30, 2022). Preliminary, unaudited results show direct public support surpassed budget expectations by 134%. Special events, including the Folly Frolic and Folly Golf Classic, reached record attendance and sponsorship support. From longstanding financial supporters to patrons who donated the face value of tickets, we are grateful to those who showed their love and validated the Folly's place in our community.

The Folly has a legacy of coming back stronger than before. Thanks to the support of our community, the Folly is, once again, prepared to enter a season of growth and revitalization.



ENHANCING COMMUNITIES, ENHANCING THE FOLLY

Theater League serves as one of the Folly's strongest underwriters. Founder and President of Theater League Mark Edelman leads the community-centered organization created to enhance the quality of life through the power of the performing arts across Kansas City, including theatre for young audiences. In addition to their exemplary support of the *Folly Jazz*, *Americana*, and *LIVE! In The Lounge* Series, Theater League helps provide education-enriching theater performances to over 8,000 Kansas City metro students annually through the *Folly Kids' Series*. They were instrumental in providing initial funding to subsidize ticket and transportation costs for Title I schools to experience the professional performances in our historic theater.



Theater League's dedication to the Folly and Kansas City's artistic growth continues to enrich our community by ensuring access to the arts. We are grateful to Mark Edelman and Theater League for helping us educate and inspire audiences young and young-at-heart.



SERVING AUDIENCES TOGETHER

Recruiting and scheduling volunteers is always a challenge, and the Folly Theater has been fortunate over the years to have many couples who volunteer together. For instance, one couple, who recently celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary, have been Folly ushers for decades. A couple's 'two-for-one' dependability is a huge benefit for the theater.

Another couple began volunteering shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic, and is making memories happen... together. **Russell and Vernita Collins** began at the Folly about four years ago, and they are one of our most active volunteer couples. Russell's grandfather was a Kansas City musician who knew Count Basie and introduced Russell to big band jazz, and the pair are devoted fans of the *Folly Jazz Series*. An impromptu conversation with an usher at a *Jazz Series* performance inspired them to sign up.

They're a busy couple, but they approach their work with a sense of fun. Russell works for the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority in the Procurement Department, and Vernita serves as a Senior Account Manager at T-Mobile in Overland Park. The couple also volunteers together at Morning Glory Ministries, a program to assist the homeless at the downtown Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

When asked for advice on why other couples should consider volunteering at the Folly, Vernita suggested couples will "enjoy [the experience] together and view it as an 'outing.' It can be a quasi-date night."

Russell added one extremely helpful piece of advice: "Be consistent and be flexible—and always wear comfortable shoes."

A big thank you to the devoted Folly volunteers who make our shows possible!



Photo by Todd Zimmer

BREAKING GROUND AND MAKING PROGRESS

The COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc on the arts and culture sector, but it gave us time for reflection. During the closure, the Folly carefully examined its operations and role as a community influencer. What does an inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible (IDEA) performing arts experience look like at the Folly? How do we create and maintain an anti-racist and anti-discriminatory atmosphere? How do we ensure all people feel represented on our historic stage?

Out of this introspection, the Folly Theater Board of Directors adopted a robust Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy Statement. Designed to ensure we reflect the communities we serve and present diverse perspectives, this statement was not an end-all statement but a starting point toward meaningful action. We recognize the evolving nature of this statement and aim to meet the changing needs of our patrons and diverse community:

We are committed to sustaining a diverse, inclusive, and equitable space where everyone who walks through our iconic theater doors – patrons, artists, employees, volunteers, and vendors – feels valued and respected regardless of gender, age, race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, education, or ability.



- By reflecting the diversity of the KC metro, we model diversity and inclusion for the entire arts industry of the nonprofit sector and better serve our patrons' and constituencies' needs for art and culture.
- We contribute to the revitalization of the Kansas City region by providing diverse entertainment/arts programming that respects and values diverse life experiences and heritages.
- We are committed to using inclusive practices to attract and retain talented employees and to providing equal opportunity for development and advancement in all our departments, programs, and worksites.
- We build a stronger theater by ensuring that all voices have an opportunity to be heard and a safe environment to share ideas.



We acknowledge that we, and the organizations that owned and operated the theater before us, have engaged in practices which, from the perspective of today's standards, were shameful and disreputable. For example, the theater was constructed on the traditional land and ancestral home of Indigenous people. During the "Jim-Crow" era, operators of this theater implemented a variety of racist practices, including segregated seating, and racist stereotyping, including blackface. In its first 74 years, the Folly routinely presented programming which was sexist to women. We recognize the errors of our past and commit to pursuing a better path which honors and respects the humanity in each of us.



While we recognize we have much more work to do, the Folly continues to take steps to ensure we are meeting, or better yet exceeding, our commitment to IDEA in every aspect of its leadership, programming, marketing, operations, and audience. As a part of this “placemaking” initiative, we actively implement internal and external practices that model the diversity of the KC Metro, value all life experiences, and maintain an inclusive theater:



- Each year, we secure grants to underwrite ticket and bus transportation costs to inspire thousands of students from Title I schools with *Folly Kids’ Series* performances. *Kids’ Series* performances include stories connected to state education standards and themes of empathy, inclusion, and respect.

- Created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the *LIVE! In The Lounge Series* features talented local artists in the Folly’s Joan Kent Dillon Lounge. This intimate, listening room concert series places emphasis on featuring artists who are women, persons of color, and/or LGBTQ.

- Phase I of The Folly 2020 Capital Campaign included steps to make the theater free of physical barriers including ADA accessible lobby-entry, orchestra-level seating, lobby restrooms, automatic entrance doors, accessible parking, and a lift to the Joan Kent Dillon Lounge.

- Folly Board and staff engage with community partners across various cultural sectors, including Chambers of Commerce (Hispanic Chamber, Asian American Chamber, and Mid-America LGBT Chamber), cultural organizations, and businesses.

- Established in 2016, the Metzler-Copaken Initiative provides underwriting to small and mid-sized organizations to perform at the Folly. The goals of this initiative are to expand and/or cultivate new audiences, promote diversity, and present new works which will contribute to Kansas City’s creative arts ecology.

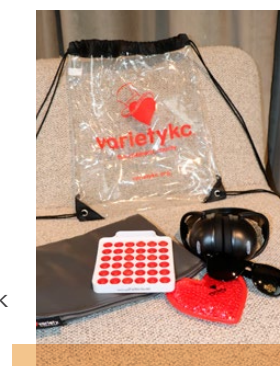


Photo by Ridpath Creative



- While making a 122-year-old theater fully accessible is nearly impossible, the Folly implemented steps to make the theater free of physical barriers including ADA accessible lobby-entry, orchestra-level seating, lobby restrooms, automatic entrance doors, accessible parking, and a lift to the Joan Kent Dillon Lounge.

- In partnership with Variety KC, Folly patrons benefit from comforting Variety KC sensory backpacks which provide a more comfortable experience for neurodiverse patrons. Resource kits are free to check out for Folly performances and include noise-reducing headphones, dark glasses, weighted pads, and handheld sensory items.



In addition to the following measures, sign-language interpreters are available at select performances. We hope to implement new hearing loop technology in the coming months to improve the performance experience for hard-of-hearing patrons. Staff members are preparing to undergo DEI training in the coming year to exemplify and better serve the Folly’s ongoing mission.

The Folly was built as Kansas City’s cultural scene began to take shape, and she has witnessed its evolution first-hand. Today, the “Grand Lady” serves as a cornerstone of

our community’s arts ecology. Now, we seek to foster an inclusive, diverse, equitable, assessable, and just future for ALL artists and audiences to be inspired.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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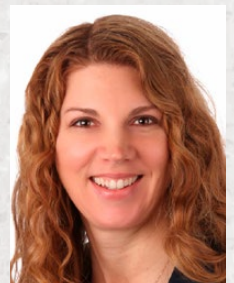
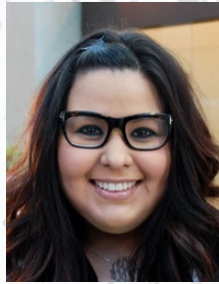
Catalyst

Jasmine Thompson

Café Sofrito and
Manila Bay on Main

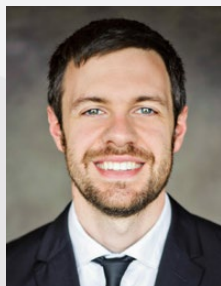
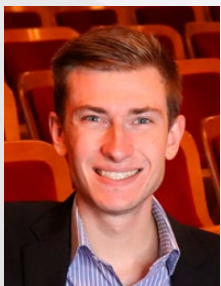
Debbie Scott Williams

Community Volunteer



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

Matthew Briggs

Development Associate

Ayron Hyatt

Finance Manager

Lee Saylor

Technical Director



Jennifer Smart

Ticketing and Administration Manager

Stephanie Spatz-Ornburn

Events Manager

Rick Truman

Executive Director



Mike Warren

Volunteer Coordinator

Brian Williams

Development Director

Technical Crew

Simon Huntley, Lighting Director; **Travis Ives**, Sound Engineer

House Managers

Angie Blaisdell, **Brandy Hersch**, **Rob Holland**,
Khalid Johnson, **Kathy Stipek-Nehls**, **Vi Tran**



*"Concerto", Ed Dwight, sculptor, Gift to the Folly Theater from Vera K. Patton, 1989.
Re-installation generously underwritten by Kissick Construction Company, Inc. /
Pete B. Browne and Julie Walker-Browne, 2022.*



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

FollyTheater.org / @FollyTheater

