



JULY 2024 - JUNE 2025

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

**CELEBRATING 116 YEARS OF ART,
COMMUNITY, AND IMPACT**

A LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT:

This year, as I reflect on my time with the Bijou Theatre, I'm struck by how far we've come and how much this place continues to mean to Knoxville and all of East Tennessee. From the first time I walked through the doors decades ago, the Bijou has always felt like more than a theatre. It's a living space, filled with memory and meaning, where our community comes together to enjoy art, culture, music, and to feel something real.

When I joined the board in 2019, the Bijou had recently paid off debt that had loomed large for years. Not long after becoming debt-free, the pandemic hit and, like so many others, we held our breath. With Courtney Bergmeier's thoughtful leadership, we not only weathered the storm but emerged even stronger.

Today, the Bijou isn't just surviving, it's thriving. We're programming with intention, reaching new audiences, and managing an operating budget in the black to ensure finances are in place to protect this 116-year-old jewel. The Bijou recently hosted its first Spanish-language performance, expanded youth camps, increased opportunities for local nonprofits, and commissioned a book to tell the full story of the historic second balcony.

What makes the Bijou special isn't just its history; it's the way it continues to echo forward. I've seen kids in theatre camp light up when they realize their voices carry perfectly on stage, just by its design. I've watched world-class artists stop mid-set to marvel at the acoustics. I was there to see Jason Isbell perform his Southeastern album twice—once on its original tour, and again ten years later for a sold-out anniversary documentary recording. Dolly Parton brought her entire family on stage to record a video companion piece for an upcoming album. When you're in those seats, you know exactly why the theatre leaves such an impact on those artists. Those moments stay with you, too.

Known as Knoxville's Jewel, the Bijou is a rare and remarkable space. It's full of heart, full of stories, and full of possibility. As my time on the Board of Directors comes to a close, I'm endlessly grateful to be part of its story, and I'm even more excited for what comes next.



With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in gold ink that reads "Catherine Rapp". The signature is fluid and cursive, matching the color of the portrait's border.

Catherine Rapp
President, 2024-2025
Bijou Theatre Board of Directors

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

Amazing show at an amazing theater. I was absolutely blown away!

The acoustics at the Bijou never fail to delight me.

Loved the show, venue, and wonderful service.

My favorite concert venue in Knoxville.

It's great to see the support for the local artists.

My first concert at the Bijou, but certainly will not be my last.

ECONOMIC IMPACT:

**\$5.1
million**

contributed to Knoxville's local economy through events and visitors.

ARTISTS FEATURED:

144

unique performances presented on the Bijou stage.

8

individual visual artists and 1 group displayed artwork in the Bijou's 2nd Floor Gallery.

EDUCATIONAL REACH:

978

children served through educational programs, such as summer camps and the Imagination Series.

71

concert tickets and 11 Friends of the Bijou memberships donated to local nonprofit organizations.

NUMBER OF SOLD-OUT SHOWS:

40

TOTAL VISITORS:

79,010

FY24-25 MILESTONES:

From Legends to Laughs to Local Favorites – Highlights from the Bijou Stage

JULY 2024

**BLACK
JOE LEWIS**

**GLENN MILLER
ORCHESTRA**
(RENTAL - SOLD OUT)

AUG 2024

**IRIS
DEMENT**

**PJ
MORTON**



2024

DEC 2024

**PRESERVATION
HALL JAZZ BAND**

SECRET SISTERS

**APPALACHIAN
EQUALITY CHORUS**
(RENTAL)

MIKE MCGILL'S
ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BENEFIT
FOR SECOND HARVEST

FEB 2025

**WARREN
HAYNES
BAND**

**WILDER
WOODS**

2025

MARCH 2025

COMEDY COMES TO THE BIJOU!

**OUTBACK PRESENTS:
ALI SIDDIQ**

**LIVENATION:
TIFFANY HADDISH**

**LIVENATION:
AZIZ ANSARI**

**EMPORIUM:
MARIA BAMFORD**

BIG EARS FESTIVAL
(RENTAL)

TN SONGWRITERS
(RENTAL)



KNOXVILLE JAZZ ORCHESTRA

KNOXVILLE'S BIG BAND HOME BASE

Since the Bijou's grand re-opening in 2006, the Knoxville Jazz Orchestra has made its home on our stage, offering world-class jazz to local audiences year-round. Led by founder and arranger Vance Thompson, the KJO has grown into one of East Tennessee's cultural treasures, blending local talent with national jazz greats. KJO is an essential part of the Bijou's rhythm and soul.

SEPT 2024

CAT POWER
SINGS
BOB DYLAN

KNOXVILLE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

A TIMELESS PARTNERSHIP

The Knoxville Symphony Orchestra has a long and storied relationship with the Bijou, dating back to the 1940s. Some of our community's most powerful musical moments have echoed through these walls. According to local lore, a symphony performance was underway at the Bijou the moment news of the Pearl Harbor attack reached Knoxville in 1941, with murmurs rippling through the crowd mid-concert. Today, more than 80 years later, the Chamber Orchestra continues to fill the Bijou with unforgettable music throughout the season, celebrating a bond between orchestra and stage that spans generations.

NOV 2024

MORNING POINTE:
SENIORS GOT TALENT
(RENTAL)

UT OPERA
(RENTAL)

OCT 2024

MJ LENDERMAN
GILLIAN WELCH &
DAVE RAWLINGS

APRIL 2025

STEPHEN WILSON JR

BIG BAD
VOODOO DADDY

DAVID SEDARIS

SEUN KUTI

GILL & DAVE PART II
(BECAUSE ONCE WAS NOT ENOUGH!)

MAY 2025

OUTBACK PRESENTS
WHITNEY
CUMMINGS
THE WAILERS

JUNE 2025

FRED ARMISEN
LIVENATION
AIMEE MANN
JUBILEE WITH
MAVIS STAPLES



EDUCATION PROGRAMS

SUMMER CAMPS: CULTIVATING CREATIVITY

This fiscal year, **The Bijou Theatre's Summer Stages Camps** gave **128 young people**, ages 6–17, the opportunity to step into the spotlight, gain confidence, and discover their creative voices.

Students explored **acting, playwriting, lighting and sound design, lyrical dance, and more**. Each camp culminated in a performance, and **466 friends and family members** filled the theatre to celebrate the growth and achievements of the campers.

“Thank you so much, Mr. Nathan and everyone at the Bijou Theatre, for helping me get the scholarship for the Bijou Theatre camp! It was my first year participating in this camp, but it definitely won't be my last. I had so much fun meeting new friends and working/learning with such intelligent people. The song and dance choices were so good! One thing I learned was how my breathing mannerisms affect my singing. Again, thank you so much for this opportunity, and I can't wait to see everyone again next summer.”

- Summer Stages camp participant

Your support of the Bijou makes stories like this possible, ensuring that more young people can discover their confidence, creativity, and voices on the Bijou's historic stage.





IMAGINATION SERIES



GOODNIGHT MOON AND THE RUNAWAY BUNNY

October 2024

Field trips: 358 students and teachers representing 19 schools and homeschool groups
Family matinee: 345 community members



HOT PEAS N BUTTER

March 2025

Field trips: 442 students and teachers representing 19 schools and homeschool groups
Family matinee: 56 community members

INSPIRING YOUNG AUDIENCES

The Bijou's Imagination Series brings professional children's theatre to East Tennessee through **immersive field trips and weekend matinee performances for families.**

Collaborating with schools, community organizations, and homeschool groups, the program welcomed **1,201 students, teachers, and families across six counties** during the past year.

Affordability and access are at the heart of the program. **\$4,800 was awarded by the Bijou** in travel grants and ticket subsidies, and **402 students attended free of charge.**

“Our kindergarten classes had an unforgettable field trip to the Bijou Theatre! The staff was welcoming and the intimate setting was perfect for our young learners. The show captured their attention and sparked their imaginations... It was a fantastic way to introduce them to the arts. We can't wait to return!”

- Teacher

Your generosity toward the Bijou supports the Imagination Series, helping to spark curiosity, build empathy, and nurture creativity in the next generation.

APPALACHIAN ALLIES

A BENEFIT FOR EAST TENNESSEE HURRICANE RELIEF

In October, the historic Bijou Theatre welcomed a remarkable gathering of artists to the stage, including Adeem The Artist, Andy Wood, Darrell Scott, Jerry Douglas, Larkin Poe, R.B. Morris, and Sarah Jarosz, for a fundraiser in the devastating aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Hosted by Daniel Kimbro and Sam Lewis, the sold-out evening featured live performances and an online fundraising auction, overflowing with music, generosity, and solidarity with those impacted.

Acclaimed singer-songwriter Joy Oladokun, known for her powerful and genre-blending music that uplifts and inspires, also hosted a heartfelt performance at the Bijou Theatre to support Hurricane Helene relief efforts. Her show rallied the community to contribute generously.

Through the combined efforts of the performers, partners, and an outpouring of community support, the Appalachian Allies event raised \$72,727, and Joy Oladokun's performance brought in \$18,714, both benefiting the East Tennessee Foundation's Hurricane Helene Disaster Relief Fund. These contributions provided urgent aid and long-term recovery support across 25 counties, demonstrating the power of music to unite people and create lasting change.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH GRANT PROGRAM: SUPPORTING LOCAL ARTISTRY

Community Outreach Grants, provided by the Bijou Theatre, fund and present free community events that celebrate diverse cultures and artistic expressions. Highlights from the past year include:

- WDVX Kidstuff: A family-friendly event bringing live music and education together in a fun, accessible format.
- Variego3+ Music from El Rio de la Plata: A stunning performance in collaboration with the Knoxville Chamber Music Society that brought Latin American music to the stage, free for all attendees.

These programs not only entertained but also engaged the community, showcasing the Bijou's dedication to inclusivity and accessibility to the arts.



LOCALS ONLY

LIVE AT
THE BIJOU

ELEVATING KNOXVILLE'S TALENT

The Locals Only Live series provides a vital platform for Knoxville's most promising local musicians to shine on the Bijou stage. This initiative celebrates homegrown talent and offers audiences a chance to discover emerging artists in a professional, intimate setting. The 2024-2025 Locals Only Live season featured:

- O Youth with Tinca Tinca and Shayla McDaniel
- Milk Man and the Big Band with Redd & The Paper-Flowers
- Three Star Revival and The Band Solstice with Wim Tapley





BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

The Beck Cultural Exchange Center brought its annual Black History Month program to the Bijou Theatre in February, marking Beck's 50th anniversary.

The special evening honored individuals who made a lasting impact on the community with **live performances by Brian Clay and the house band, The Austin-East Dance Company, and the Austin-East African Drummers.**

Guests also experienced soulful singing, thought-provoking poetry, and captivating monologues that reflected shared experiences to **inspire future generations.** Hosted by the Bijou, which provided the venue and covered event costs, this free program offered **a meaningful night of history, art, and community.**



BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL

In March, the Bijou Theatre once again became a gateway to the world with the return of the Banff Mountain Film Festival, **the largest adventure film tour on the planet.** As part of the 2024/2025 World Tour, audiences experienced award-winning films selected from **over 400 submissions**, showcasing the beauty of remote landscapes, the richness of global cultures, and the thrill of extreme sports.

Over two nights, each with a completely unique lineup, **the festival celebrated the boundless spirit of exploration and the power of storytelling to inspire and connect people.**

A portion of ticket sales **benefited the Legacy Parks Foundation and the Appalachian Mountain Bike Club**, supporting efforts to preserve natural spaces and expand outdoor recreation opportunities in our community.



2025 BIJOU JUBILEE

SOUTHERN SOUL REVIVAL

The 2025 Bijou Jubilee, presented by Lawson Family Foundation, was a night to remember! Guests arrived in retro style and brought soulful energy as they gathered to celebrate Knoxville's cultural jewel, the historic Bijou Theatre. The evening began with a **VIP Pre-Show Party** under a large tent on Cumberland Avenue, featuring **Southern flavors, handcrafted cocktails, and live performances by DJ Soularia and the Knoxville Opera Gospel Choir.**

The lively block party atmosphere carried into an unforgettable concert on the Bijou stage, **headlined by legendary singer Mavis Staples.** Thanks to the generous support of attendees, auction bidders, sponsors, and donors, **the Jubilee raised \$62,283** to support the ongoing preservation and vibrant future of the Bijou Theatre.



"I have been a frequent patron of the beautiful historic Bijou Theatre for as long as I can remember. When the opportunity to volunteer arose, **I jumped at the chance!** It is an honor to help raise money for this beautiful nonprofit venue. **I love being part of the reason that the theatre can continue its mission.**"

- Nina Reineri, Jubilee Volunteer



YOUR SUPPORT

LIGHTS UP THE BIJOU STAGE!

FRIENDS OF THE BIJOU

Since its founding, Friends of the Bijou—our dedicated membership program—has proudly surpassed \$1 million in contributions. This milestone reflects the incredible generosity and commitment of our community, whose ongoing support fuels the Bijou Theatre’s mission to present inspiring performances, educational programs, and cultural events. Friends of the Bijou members play a vital role in sustaining the theatre as a vibrant hub for arts and connection, and we are deeply grateful for their continued partnership in bringing the magic of the Bijou to life. As a thank-you for their support, Friends enjoy special benefits including early ticket access, waived service fees, and invitations to members-only events.

CELEBRATING
\$1 MILLION
IN MEMBERSHIP
DONATIONS!



912

members contributed

\$295,926

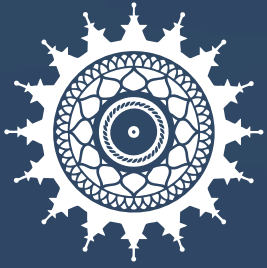
in FY24-25

3,480

event tickets purchased
with early access &
waived service
fees



Learn more and become a Friend at
knoxbijou.org/friend.



BIJOU
CENTURY CLUB



Since 2024, Earthadelic has supported the Bijou Theatre as members of the Century Club. Designed as an opportunity for companies and individuals to engage with the theatre year-round, Century Club membership includes tickets to Bijou shows, marketing benefits, and customizable amenities.

“**Earthadelic** considers itself a community organization above all else, so when we were looking at the things in our city that we value, the arts were near the top of the list. The opportunity to partner with an organization as integral to the Knoxville art community as the Bijou Theatre was too perfect to pass up,”

shared *Josh Formont*, Director of Sales & Marketing at **Earthadelic**.

“The Bijou has helped Earthadelic connect with people in a way we have not been able to do so before. Whether it was collaborating on ticket giveaways, being featured in the email newsletter, or getting the chance to tell audiences about Earthadelic while introducing the next amazing band to grace their stage, the Bijou has been a fantastic partner for not just philanthropic pursuits, but brand awareness and marketing as a whole. Earthadelic and our employees love and support the Bijou Theatre and its mission.”

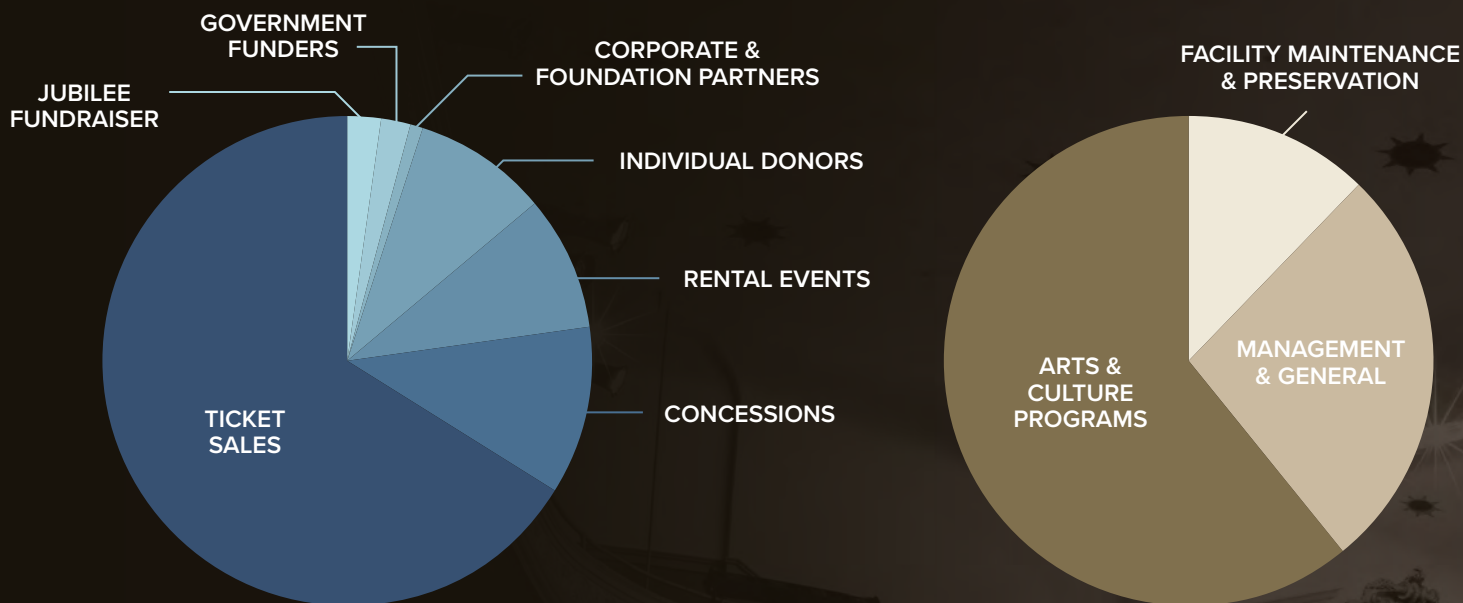


Learn more about Century Club at
knoxbijou.org/centuryclub/



HOW WE RECEIVE SUPPORT

WHERE YOUR SUPPORT IS GOING



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we wrap up another incredible year at the Bijou, I'm filled with gratitude for the artists who've brought our stage to life, the audiences who made each show feel electric, and for this community that continues to believe in this historic little theatre.

And I'm genuinely excited for what's next.

In the coming year, we'll be laying the groundwork for exciting changes designed to make the Bijou more accessible, more welcoming, and more sustainable. We're thinking about the next hundred years and how this beloved historic space can continue to grow with our city and reflect the vibrancy of the community it belongs to.

We'll have more to share soon, but for now, thank you for being part of our success story.

Courtney Bergmeier
Executive Director

MEET THE BIJOU TEAM



Courtney Bergmeier
Executive Director



Nathan McGhee
General Manager



Heather Seiber
Business Manager



Lacey Mellott
Director of Development



Serenity Shalander
Technical Director



Olivia Shuirr
Development Manager



Morgan Moody
Ticketing Director



Carolina Moralejo
Event Manager



Brian Andreasen
Facility Manager



William Tugwell
*Assistant
Technical Director*



Jordan Takach
*Theatre Operations
Assistant*



Jordan Chapman
Head Custodian



Jeff Whitworth
*-Worthwhile Sound-
Talent Buyer*



Rhett Talbert
*-Loch & Key-
Marketing Director*



Frankie
Head of Security



Otto
Stage Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Catherine Rapp
President

David Arning
Vice President

Cole Renfro
Treasurer

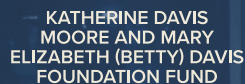
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