



IMPERIAL
THEATRE

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



Prepared by
Bethany Stout

Prepared for
IT Board of Directors

www.imperialtheatre.ca



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Imperial Theatre
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The IT Mission

Imperial Theatre is an 852-seat historic building that has enriched our community through live performance and outreach programming for over 30-years since its restoration and reopening. A successful and independently run charitable organization, Imperial Theatre is our region's premier Performing Arts Centre. It is governed by a volunteer board of seventeen directors comprised of an appointed director from each of the four municipal councils of Grand Bay-Westfield, Rothesay, Quispamsis and Saint John with the rest being elected by the theatre's general membership.

Value Statements

Imperial Theatre is dedicated to managing its business based on the following core values:

We value **our building** and as such are committed to preserving and promoting its history and beauty.

We value **our community** and as such we endeavour to provide a quality, inclusive entertainment experience to a wide-ranging audience.

We value **our people** and as such we strive to create an atmosphere of collaboration, teamwork, and excellence for our staff and stakeholders.



Enrich

by providing a professional quality, multi-purpose facility;



Engage

through world-class entertainment experiences



Inspire

with the presentation of local, national and International productions and the development of the arts

Safer Spaces

We strive to make Imperial Theatre a respectful, welcoming, fun, and caring space for patrons, performers, artists, agents, managers, employees, and volunteers alike. Imperial Theatre will not tolerate discrimination, aggressive speech, or violent acts. This includes but is not limited to: racism, white supremacy, sexism, heterosexism/homophobia, cissexism/transphobia, queerphobia, sizeism, ableist and ageist comments, and all acts of violence and harassment.

Year in Review

Dear Friends and Supporters,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Imperial Theatre, I am delighted to extend our profound gratitude to the many individuals, organizations, and communities whose generous support makes the magic of performing arts come alive in our region.

The performing arts are more than entertainment—they are a vital force that nurtures creativity, connects diverse communities, preserves culture, and inspires future generations. Imperial Theatre is proud to serve as a cultural beacon for the Fundy region, bringing world-class performances and meaningful programs to our audiences, schools, and community groups.

We are deeply thankful to our core public funders: the Government of Canada and the Province of New Brunswick for their steadfast support, which is the foundation of our ongoing work. Our appreciation also goes to the Fundy Regional Service Commission and the communities it represents—the Fundy Rural District, the Town of Grand Bay-Westfield, the Town of Hampton, the Town of Quispamsis, the Town of Rothesay, the City of Saint John, and the Town of St. Martins—for their partnership in enriching the cultural landscape.

Our heartfelt thanks extend to the Bank of Montreal, the Sisters of Charity, the McKean Foundation, and Don Mitchener for generously funding the Imperial Theatre School Series, which welcomed over 2,500 students this year. This vital program nurtures young minds and instills a lifelong love of the arts. We are also grateful to UCT and Rotary for providing crucial bus subsidies that made attending possible for many students.

A special note of thanks to Don Mitchener for sponsoring our March Break Movie event, where 744 children and families enjoyed “Chicken Run” along with complimentary snacks, creating joyful family experiences at no cost.

The Royal Bank of Canada supported our Ambassador Program, warmly welcoming over 388 newcomers to the theatre and helping them feel at home in our city. Supporting culturally rich Indigenous programming and workshops, the Saint John Community Foundation and Atlantic Lotto have contributed greatly to our inclusive artistic vision, as has the TD Ready Commitment through its support of our Diversified Voices Series.

Outreach and seniors programming flourish thanks to the generosity of The Lockhart Foundation, James Venner Russell Foundation, and The Michael and Grat Wennberg Foundation. Their backing ensures access to the arts for all ages and abilities.

Finally, to our individual donors — your support truly makes an enormous difference. You are the lifeblood of our theatre community, enabling us to dream bigger and reach further.

Together, we strengthen the cultural heart of our region through the transformative power of live performance. Thank you for being an essential part of this shared journey.

With deep appreciation,

Li Song
President, Imperial Theatre



Year in Review

As Executive Director of Imperial Theatre, it is my privilege to reflect on a landmark year for our organization during its 31st season. This year, we celebrated significant milestones that underscore the vital role the performing arts play in enriching the cultural landscape of Saint John and the broader Atlantic region.

One of our most ambitious achievements was completing over \$4 million in capital infrastructure upgrades. A cornerstone of this work was the successful execution of a comprehensive HVAC green energy retrofit. By replacing our outdated heating system with an advanced, energy-efficient system, we have substantially reduced our carbon footprint while enhancing comfort for all who visit. Cooling was extended beyond the auditorium to the entire building, improving the experience for audiences and artists alike. This project, which required us to close for 16 weeks, has already begun yielding operational cost savings and environmental benefits, positioning the theatre as a leader in sustainable facility management.

Despite this temporary closure, our stage remained vibrant with performances from over 30 artists and companies representing the diverse artistic talents of Canada and the world. Highlights included renowned names such as Colin Mochrie, the Celtic Tenors, Atlantic Ballet Theatre, Alan Cumming, and the Shanghai Circus, who also brought joy to local seniors through outreach performances. Our dynamic educational programs continued to expand, engaging students across southern New Brunswick with school shows, workshops, tours, and free community events that foster a deep connection between the arts and our region's youth.

Beyond the Imperial Theatre's presented season, numerous Canadian and international artists toured the region, captivating our audiences. Local artistic companies such as Symphony NB and Saint John Theatre Company—community partners since our opening in 1994—brought people together to celebrate the remarkable talent within our province. Their success is truly our success.

We also made significant advancements behind the scenes with new technology installations, including a state-of-the-art video wall, projector, upgraded stage equipment, and enhanced security systems, and integrating a brand new Ticketing System. These improvements ensure that Imperial Theatre remains a top-tier venue capable of attracting premier Canadian and international artists.

While economic challenges and tariffs affected ticket sales and touring schedules, the resilience and dedication of our staff, board, and community partners enabled us to navigate these obstacles strategically. Although the year ended with a manageable financial loss, we remain optimistic, with ticket sales rebounding and a robust lineup planned for the upcoming season.

None of these accomplishments would be possible without the unwavering support of our patrons, including our 865 valued members, and our generous corporate sponsors. Your commitment sustains live entertainment in our region and helps us share the transformative power of the arts.

To our volunteers—THANK YOU! You are the welcoming face of our organization, and we are endlessly grateful for your time, dedication, and care for both the building and our patrons.

Thank you for standing with Imperial Theatre as we continue to foster creativity, community, and culture in Saint John.

Angela Campbell
Executive Director



Board & Staff Members

IT Board Members

President - Li Song
 Vice-President - Peter Stoddart
 Treasurer - Julie Estrabrooks
 Secretary - Mercy Oyet
 Director - Elenor Austin
 Director - John Buckley
 Director - Rufina Ajalie
 Director - Dahlia Das
 Director - Michele Flarow
 Director - Richard Gradon
 Director - Kevin Greaves
 Director - Alana Lawson
 Director - Moira Goodfellow
 Director - Robert MacKinnon
 Director - Nicole Vair
 Past President - Mel Norton

Foundation Board Members

President - Cindy Millett
 Vice-President - David Laskey
 Treasurer - Derrick Bishop
 Secretary - Michael Wennberg
 Director - Hilary Brock
 Director - Nick Doyle
 Director - Dr. Eshwar Kumar
 Director - Chelsea Ferris
 Director - John Buckley
 Director - Nancy Riven
 Director - Dr. Wendy Stewart
 Past President - Ian Stead

Staff

Executive Director - Angela Campbell
 AED/Programming - Bethany Stout
 Director - Ops & Finance - Ruth McLeese
 Operations Manager - Shelley Brown
 Marketing Manager - Kathleen McLeod
 Development Dir - Heather White Brittain
 Technical Director - Scott McRae
 Lighting Director - Liam Mathieson
 Head Carpenter - Bob McNulty
 Head of Sound - Sean Boyer
 Box Off/Sponsorship - Lindsay Jacquard
 Asst Box Office Manager - Lindsay Hazen
 FOH & Outreach - Emma McEvoy
 Hospitality Manager - Caleb Crandall
 Head Custodian - Peter Walsh



Imperial Presented shows

Live shows

- Dancing The Seven Teachings
- The Wonder Of It All
- Atlantic Ballet: PISUWIN
- Lemon Bucket Orkestra: Cuckoo
- Trans-Canada Highwaymen
- HYPROV: Improv under Hypnosis
- Christmas with The Ennis Sisters
- The Celtic Tenors Christmas
- Imperial Holiday Sing-Along
- ROOTS: Dominique Fils-Aimé
- Josephine: A Burlesque Cabaret Dream Play
- Sarah Hagen: Goldberg Variations
- CAL Performs: The Eagles - Greatest Hits
- The Baby Tyler Show
- Epidermis Circus
- The Irish Rovers in Concert
- As You Like It, or The Land Acknowledgement
- Maryna Krut
- Choir! Choir! Choir!
- Patterdad
- Chris Funk: Redefining Wonder
- Och & Oy!: A Considered Cabaret
- Och & Oy!: A Considered Cabaret (Halifax)
- Duane Andrews and the Hot Club of Conception Bay
- The Peking Acrobats
- Tamar Ilana + Ventanas
- Ballet Jorgen: Sleeping Beauty
- Matt Dusk Sings Tony Bennett

Single Presentations

- Rose Cousins

School shows

- Dancing The Seven Teachings
- Returns Department
- DeeDee Austin
- The Alphabet of Awesome Science

Retro film/TIFF

- TIFF: The People's Joker
- Retro Film: Batman Returns (1992)
- TIFF: The Zone of Interest (2023)
- Community Film: We Are the Warriors (2023)
- TIFF: Dumb Money (2023)
- Retro Film: The Nightmare Before Christmas (1993)
- Retro Film: Planes, Trains and Automobiles (1987)
- TIFF: The Queen of My Dreams (2023)
- Special Event: Family Sparkles Film Fest
- Retro Film: GRINCH DOUBLE BILL How the Grinch Stole Christmas! (1966) / How the Grinch Stole Christmas (2000)
- TIFF: Fallen Leaves (2023)
- Retro Film: Raising Arizona (1987)
- TIFF: Anora (2024)
- Retro Film: Moulin Rouge (2001)
- TIFF: Flow (2024)
- Retro Film: Chicken Run (2000)
- TIFF: Universal Language (2024)
- Retro Film: The Maltese Falcon (1941)
- TIFF: Emilia Perez (2024)
- TIFF: The Substance (2024)
- Retro Film: National Lampoon's Vacation (1983)
- Retro Film: The Matrix (1999)

Private IT Events

- Joint Board Meeting and Staff Presentations
- AGM
- Holiday Mixer
- Staff Holiday Party
- President's Backstage Party
- Member Drink Tasting with Yip
- Volunteer Appreciation - Dinner and a Movie
- Season Launch 32

Touring & Rental shows

Ticketed shows

- Kenny and Dolly Together Again
- Menopause The Musical 2
- Seven Drunken Nights: The Story of the Dubliners
- Frozen In Time x 2
- The Lightfoot Band
- Tenille Townes
- Walk Right Back: The Everly Brothers Story
- Running in Circles: 100 Miles to Save a Life
- Tommy Emmanuel, CGP - Live In Concert
- WILDFLOWERS: Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers
- Lunch At Allen's: Farewell Tour
- SNB: Classic Film - The China Syndrome
- Matt Minglewood Band: Thru The Years
- The Australian Bee Gees
- GYPSY: Premiere Fleetwood Mac Tribute
- TOM GREEN: Live in Saint John
- The British Legends Tribute
- Preacher Lawson
- Stadacona Band and David Myles
- Kenny & Dolly's Christmas Tribute
- SNB: Family Concert - Holiday Magic
- Thane Dunn's Elvis Christmas Special
- Smooth Criminal: A Michael Jackson Tribute
- Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival World Tour
- Dreamer: A Supertramp Tribute
- Sugar Sammy Canadian Tour 2025
- HIGHWAYMEN SHOW - American Outlaws Tribute
- Mini Pop Kids: The Celebration Tour
- O'Brien by Thomas Hodd
- Brett Kissel
- Derek Edwards: OXY MORON
- Snowed In Comedy Tour
- Steve-O Super Dummy! Tour
- ABRA Cadabra
- COUNTRY BOYS
- Bobcaygeon: A Tribute to the Tragically Hip
- LOVEU2
- Legends Show
- NB Sports Hall of Fame: 55th Annual Induction Ceremony
- KidSing presents Creative Confident Kids! x 2
- St. Mary's Band Fundraising Concert
- Rothesay Ballet School 50th Anniversary Recital
- First City School of Dance: The Art of Dance
- Step In Time x 2
- Green River Revival: CCR Tribute Concert
- RUMOURS: The Ultimate Fleetwood Mac Tribute
- Harland Williams
-
- SNB: Chart Toppers [The Funny Bone Edition]
- SNB: For The Fallen
- SJTC: Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
- Gala Ballet: The Nutcracker
- Gala Ballet: The Nutcracker
- Gala Ballet: The Nutcracker
- SNB - Christmas Matinee
- NBYO in Concert
- SJTC: Lend Me a Tenor
- SNB: Fauré's Requiem
- SNB: Homeland
- SJTC: Dial M for Murder
- SNB: Bravo Bolero

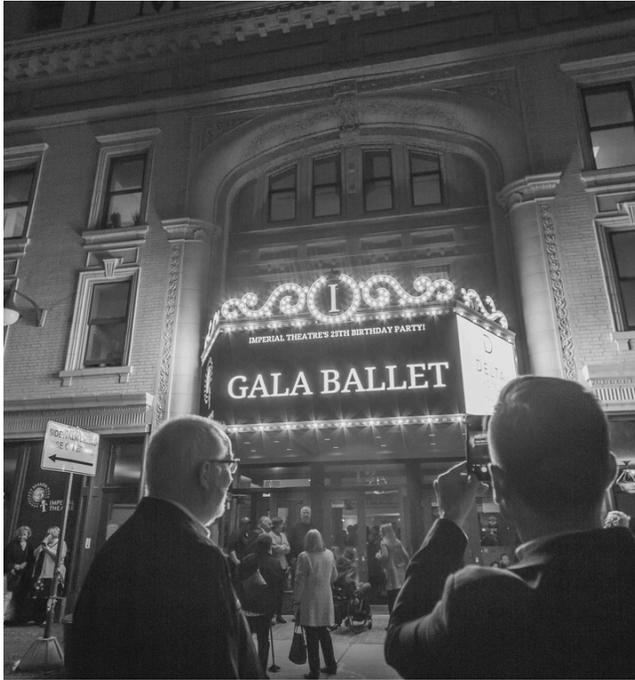
Touring & Rental shows

Non-ticketed shows

- Author Talks - FogLit (Upper Lobby)
- Author Talks - FogLit (Upper Lobby)
- Author Talks - FogLit (Upper Lobby)
- UNBSJ Fall Convocation
- SJ Learning Exchange Graduation
- Jim Crooks' Celebration of Life
- Third Space Gallery AGM
- Envision SJ Reception
- Irving Oil March Break Movie - Chicken Run
- APA MemberConnect - Drag Bing and Tour
- Dal Med Grad Class of 2025
- Port Days Opening Reception
- Opportunities NB
- St Malachys Graduation Class of 2025



Facilities & Operations Overview + Building



Along with presenting an annual season, Imperial Theatre also acts as a rental facility for local and touring events.

Rental opportunities include our full auditorium, the stage, and the Upper and Main Lobbies.

We support our presented shows as well as rentals with full backstage amenities, rehearsal space, food & beverage, technical facilities, ticketing, and marketing & communications.

Days in use

176

IT presented Events

80

Other Events

96

Total Attendance

54,963

Vs. last season



-19%

Vs. last season



-21%

Vs. last season



-17%

Vs. last season



-17%

Facilities & Operations Overview + Building

Facility updates and Maintenance for 24/25 Season

Prepared by Facilities Manager, Shelly Brown



- July - September 2024 Major HVAC overhaul installation continued, with the building ready for shows again in the middle of September. Upgrading the controlled zones of the building from 3 to 8 zones while cutting down on CO2 emissions, and finally providing lobbies with air conditioning.
- July - August 2024 completion of privacy stalls in all public washrooms
- February 2025 Gil-Son Electrical ran all cables through the entire building for intrusion alarm upgrades and security camera installation.
- February 2025 Quality Sound Alarm completes installation of new panel and all motion detectors for intrusion alarm system.
- April 2025 Wilsons Security completes installation of CCTV system, including 8 cameras throughout the building and exterior perimeter.
- Acquisition of new stage technical equipment: Video wall, Projector, and other essential system upgrades.

Through outreach we connect artists and the performing arts with our communities onsite but also, where they live. Be that a rural community centre, a middle school gym or a senior's home.

Community Outreach

EVENT / LOCATION / ATTENDEES

Free Latin Rhythms Dance **Workshop** (local artist) / **King's Square** / 20

Dance **Workshop & Presentation** with Chimera Project / **St. John the Baptist-King Edward School** / 45

Beginner Belly Dancing **Workshop** (local artists) / **Onstage @ Imperial Theatre** / 22

Ennis Sisters **Care Home Performance** / **Parkland Saint John (Marco Polo Room)** / 23

Gala Ballet **Care Home Performances** (local artists) / **Loch Lomond Village, Shannex & Kings Way** / 20

Pre-Show **Whiskey Tasting** / **Golding's Lounge** / 18

Newcomer **Tours** / **Imperial Theatre** / 57

Sarah Hagen **Care Home Performance** / **Ruth Ross Residence** / 15

Swing Dance **Workshop** with Claire Ahern (local artist) / **Onstage @ Imperial Theatre** / 35

Duane Andrews with Erin Power and Ray Legere **Care Home Performance** / **Turnbull Nursing Home** / 24

Movement for Wellness **Workshop** (local artists) / **Onstage @ Imperial Theatre** / 21

Ballet 101 **Workshop** with Ballet Jorgen / **Stone Church** / 10

Ballet Jorgen **Masterclass** and Audition / **Rothesay Ballet School** / 12

Free Matinee **Movie** for special needs youth and adults / **Imperial Theatre** / 71

Participants in this years outreach events: 393



Fund Development

Season 31 underlined the heartfelt generosity of Imperial Friends who show up in tremendous ways to help support community both on and off our stage. Our donors represent a generous and collective spirit that is united in caring and sharing. “Together we can do so much.” – Hellen Keller
The steadfast support of Imperial Friends made it possible for us to expand our reach to outlining communities this past year with the offering of Imperial’s Free Outreach Programming – for all ages, all stage, all walks of life.

Annual donations provided opportunities for engagement that included free workshops and complimentary tickets, free artists performances with visits to assisted living and retirement residences, free performances for children and youth including bus subsidies, free visits to schools featuring performing artists, free ballet classes, free movies, free community performances and so much more. As one Imperial Friend shared: “I had no idea you provided all these free programs!”

A Recap of Your Support This Past Year for Imperial’s FREE Outreach Programming:

- 388+ complimentary tickets were extended through the Ambassador Program where new residents connected to Imperial Theatre. Many thanks to RBC for their belief and support in this program.
- 3 Ambassador Receptions were held where newcomers and local residents connected over complimentary refreshments and snacks before each performance.
- 2778+ students received complimentary ticket through Imperial’s FREE School Series Program. Heartfelt gratitude to those who supported us this past year: BMO, Sisters of Charity, UCT, New Brunswick Children’s Foundation, McKean Foundation.
- 47 Buses received subsidies for participating schools to attend these FREE performances. Heartfelt thanks to BMO, UCT, Sisters of Charity, for their continued support.
- Visiting artists performed at 4 retirement residences and assisted living care. Special thanks to The Lockhart Family Foundation for making this possible.
- At the end of Season 31, we presented a free movie for residents of Ruth Ross Centracare and participants of Key Industries. Guests were literally treated to the ‘red carpet’ along with free refreshments and snacks.
- A free Movement Workshop was provided as part of our free outreach.
- Free Tickets were issued for the annual March Break Movie. The theatre was full and delighted children and youth were treated to free snacks and refreshments.
- Heartfelt thanks to Imperial Best Friend, Don Mitchener who initiated this free outreach activity and special thanks for seeing a need to increase his support in Season 32.

Fund Development cont.

The value of stewardship was consistently front and centre in Season 31 when we completed the final stage of the HVAC installation. We couldn't have done this without the support of our government funders, private foundations and Imperial donors. \$97,500 was awarded to Imperial Theatre to help with capital improvements under the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund Program. These improvements included a video wall to improve audience development and the overall experience of being in the auditorium.

Additional acquisitions and improvements included upgrades to Imperial's hearing assisted devices, new refrigerators to accommodate concessions, a security system upgrade and additional furniture to add value to the patron experience in Imperial's upper and lower level lobbies. Thank you to our Imperial Friends and all those who stepped forward to support our programming and ensure that our building remains for future generations.

These gifts and contributions are not about how much one gives but what we can accomplish together in the spirit of sharing and caring about Imperial Theatre. Heartfelt gratitude to donors who are no longer with us and left lasting gifts to the Imperial Theatre Foundation and special thanks to thoughtful donations from new Imperial Friends who contributed to the Foundation and free Outreach Programming. Altogether these acts of kindness preserve a continued legacy of meaningful and lasting community connection through the performing arts.

In appreciation,
Heather White Brittain



Marketing

Season 31 was a year of transition and growth for the Marketing Department at Imperial Theatre, particularly in the areas of social media and digital advertising. Mid-season we found the right collaborators who we brought on for dedicated support for digital advertising, allowing us to expand our content creation, strengthen our online presence, and better target audiences with paid campaigns. This partnership helped us streamline messaging and boost engagement across platforms, and we're optimistic about its long-term impact.

Mid-season brought some unexpected challenges. We experienced a noticeable dip in audience spending and engagement, which impacted ticket sales across several shows. While difficult to pinpoint a single cause, we know the lull didn't reflect the quality of the season. Despite this, we remained agile, adjusting campaign timing and creative content.

Our email newsletters continued to be a reliable and responsive channel. We saw steady list growth, strong open rates, and enthusiastic responses to contests, exclusive content, and pre-sale announcements. Memberships also remained steady. While growth was

modest, retention was strong, and the added emphasis on member perks - like early access to tickets and VIP communications - helped reinforce the value of being part of the Imperial community. With new tools in place, lessons learned, and exciting programming ahead, we move into Season 32 with renewed focus and optimism.



Members



857

Vs. last season



856

Facebook



14,310

Vs. last season



13,614

Instagram



4331

Vs. last season



3746

E-News



12,472

Vs. last season



12,652

Threads



878

Vs. last season

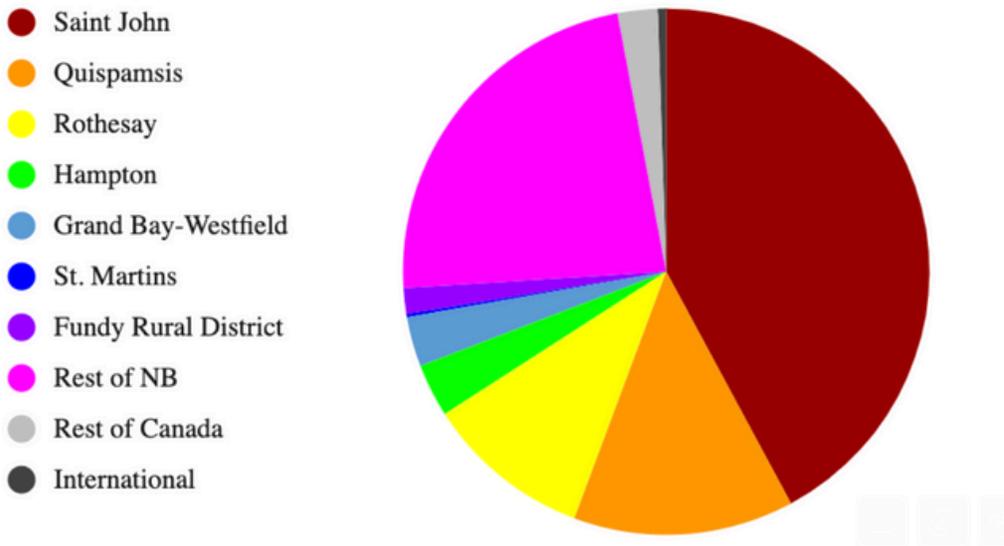


747

Box Office & Ticketing

Saint John	41.9%
Quispamsis	13.4%
Rothesay	10.2%
Hampton	3.3%
Grand Bay-Westfield	3.0%
St. Martins	0.2%
Fundy Rural District	1.6%
Rest of NB	22.9%
Rest of Canada	2.4%
International	0.51%

Tickets Sold by Region 2024-25



46.6% of patrons are buying more than 8 weeks out
 52% of patrons attended in groups of 2

Membership:

- 11,383 tickets sold to members
- 3464 drink vouchers earned by members

School Series:

- 2,883 students attended
- 23 different schools, from St. Martins to Campobello Island!

Volunteer Program

Imperial Theatre volunteers are the heart and soul of each show, event, and out in the community. They give their time freely and provide an essential service to our patrons, creating a welcoming and supporting environment for all. Our volunteers are theatre lovers, patrons of the arts, newcomers to the community, and people who want to give something back. We are privileged to have a great group of people who are always looking for new opportunities to learn and grow together.

Our current volunteer program consists of Operational Volunteers, Youth Corps, the IT Board, and the Foundation Board. Each area is integral to Imperial Theatre's day-to-day operations. We welcome new volunteers each year and continually work to build our presence with local organizations.

Our Volunteer Co-ordinator makes it priority to recruit new volunteers every season to bring new faces to our Volunteer crew and to keep building towards a sustainable, diverse and positive future.



Imperial Theatre Foundation

The Endowment

The Imperial Theatre Foundation, Inc. was incorporated under New Brunswick laws in 1984 as a non-profit organization in support of the arts in general and the operations of the Bi-Capitol Project, Inc. (since renamed Imperial Theatre) in particular once it was restored and renovated. Originally incorporated as the Bi-Capitol Foundation, its name was changed when the theatre's name was changed.

The Foundation is managed by a Board of Directors, including Chairperson, President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary.

The Foundation was brought into existence to raise an endowment fund, the investment income from which can be directed primarily to providing Saint John's performing arts centre with an assured base of financial support which when combined with ticket sales revenue, grants from the City of Saint John and surrounding municipalities, sponsorships, and other income would help to ensure the financial viability of the centre and prevent it from becoming a financial liability for the City of Saint John.

The endowment fund seeks to harness the power of investment return to provide a stable financial basis of operation for Imperial Theatre. Seeking, as it did in 1984, to provide for the future needs of Imperial Theatre even before it opened, the project broke new ground in arts funding.

