

A photograph of a theater stage. The stage is framed by a red curtain with a blue valance. The valance has a scalloped edge and is decorated with gold trim. Above the valance is a gold decorative border with a central crest featuring a red shield with a white 'S' and a gold 'T'. To the left, there is a white column and a decorative archway with a lattice pattern. The overall scene is richly decorated and ornate.

STADIUM THEATRE HISTORY

The logo for Stadium Theatre, featuring a gold crest with a red shield containing a white 'S' and a gold 'T', surrounded by gold scrollwork and red and gold floral elements.

STADIUM THEATRE
PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE



Arthur Darman, a successful Woonsocket industrialist, built the Stadium Theatre in 1926 and guided it through its first 30 years.

elevated seating which gives every patron the luxury of feeling that they have the best seat in the house.

Not only did Mr. Darman fund the project, but he also influenced the design of the theatre. He chose an elaborate but stylish look that set the theatre apart from what he felt were the “gaudy” movie houses of the day. His preference, 18th century Neoclassical style, is very evident throughout the building. Arthur loved Vaudeville and entertaining audiences and it was through his determination that the theatre thrived.

The curtain rises...

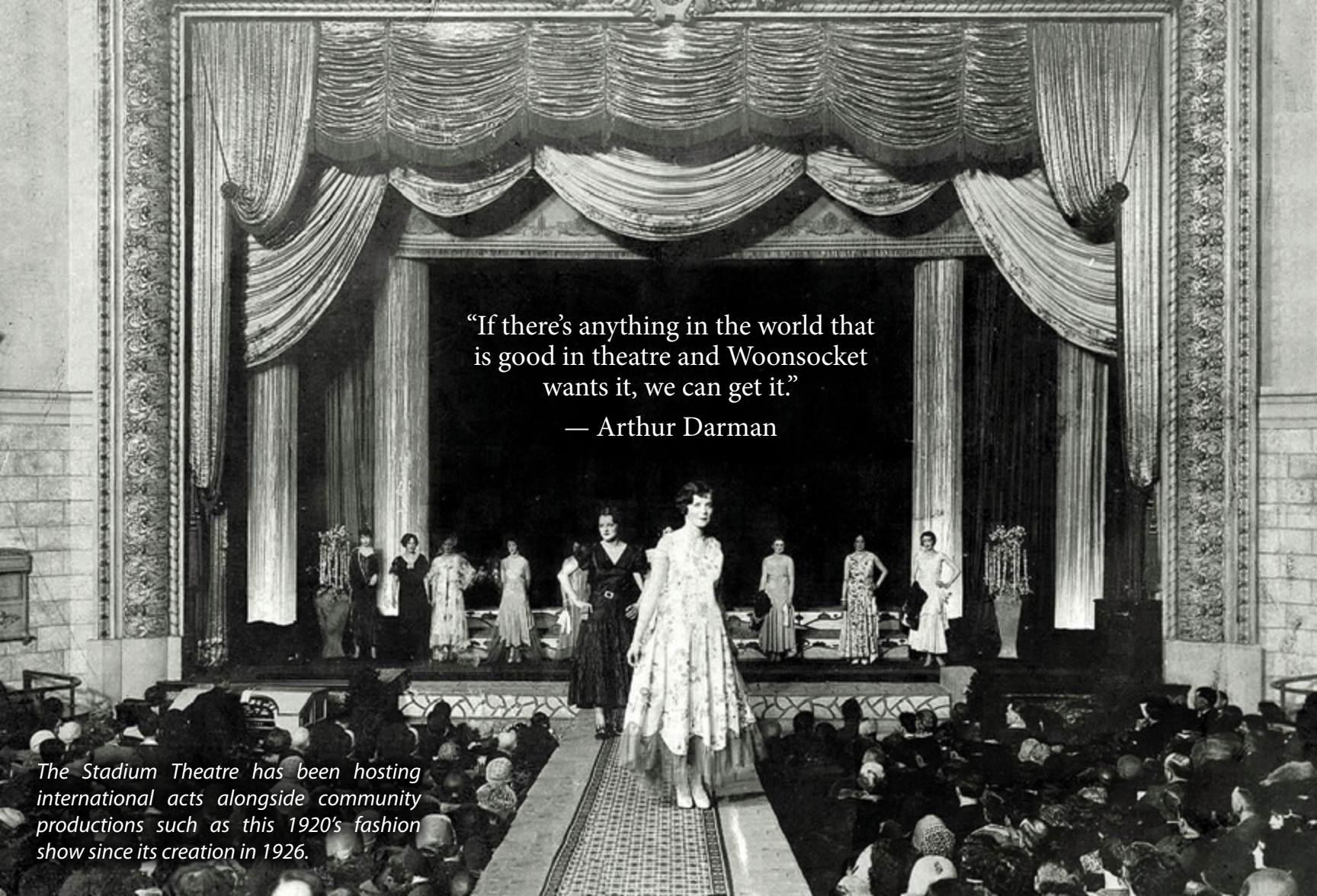
In its early years the Stadium hosted three shows a day, seven days a week, featuring a twelve-piece orchestra, the Wurlitzer organ, a vaudeville act plus a newsreel and feature film. Stars of the day such as Charlie Chaplin,

Al Jolson and Will Rogers graced the Stadium stage and many acts from New York made their way to Woonsocket. Darman proudly noted his theatre’s capabilities to present the brightest stars of the day. He said, “If there’s anything in the world that is good in theatre and Woonsocket wants it, we can get it.”

Enter the villain...

The escalating cost of quality live entertainment and the advent of movie multiplexes led to the theatre’s decline. It reached its lowest point when it was leased to a Boston group that showed X-rated films. Due to the massive decline in revenue, the Stadium Theatre was forced to close its doors in 1985. By the 1990’s the Stadium was slated to face the wrecking ball.

Intermission...



“If there’s anything in the world that is good in theatre and Woonsocket wants it, we can get it.”

— Arthur Darman

The Stadium Theatre has been hosting international acts alongside community productions such as this 1920’s fashion show since its creation in 1926.

Act One

The stage is set...

In 1926, Arthur Darman invested one million dollars to build the Stadium Theatre and the adjacent office building in downtown Woonsocket, Rhode Island. He called the theatre the Stadium in reference to its stadium style seating—



Act Two Enter the heroes!

In 1991, even as the theatre was a boarded up relic facing impending doom, a small group of citizens could still envision the Stadium's beauty through the years of decay and graffiti. This group, led by Woonsocket Mayor Francis Lanctot, came together to form the Save Our Stadium (S.O.S.) Committee. Their first task was to raise funds for the purchase and restoration of the theatre.

On a dreary, rainy day the committee held a radiothon under the dim marquee. They hoped to raise their first \$1,000 towards the restoration, but they were completely unprepared for the generous outpouring of community support that followed. Within 24 hours, individuals

from all over the region had come to the theatre and collectively donated over \$25,000! Thus, the Stadium Theatre's rebirth began.

In 1996 the S.O.S. Committee was renamed the Stadium Theatre

Foundation, and by 1998 the nonprofit foundation had raised over three million dollars. This mission was a labor of love and persistence. Without a single paid staff person, numerous volunteers worked countless hours cleaning, fundraising

Next time you visit, make sure to notice the eighteenth century neoclassical style murals and reliefs throughout the theatre. The Stadium is a majestic example of Vaudeville splendor.



Photo courtesy of Trig Photography

STADIUM



THE FARRELLY BROS
PRESENT
STUCK ON YOU

and operating the theatre to host concerts and performances during this restoration period. Paint peeled and plaster fell to the beat of many a rock concert!

As years passed, the movement became viral in the community and even attracted the attention of several prominent individuals. These individuals included movie producers the Farrelly Brothers, who hosted the world movie premieres for *There's Something About*

Mary and *Stuck on You*. Hollywood stars including Cher, Ben Stiller and Woody Harrelson were in attendance.

Set changes...

By 2001 the Stadium Theatre Foundation had completely restored the grand hall as well as the elaborate lobby to its magnificent historic stature. Due to popular demand and activity, in 2009 the Stadium expanded its ownership of the

*Left Photo: Cher and Peter Farrelly arrive at the Stadium for the **Stuck on You** film premiere. Lower Photo: The Stadium Theatre lobby grand staircase as it appears today, post renovation.*



Photo courtesy of Trig Photography

surrounding properties by purchasing the arcade Main Street entrance, the alley entrance, additional office spaces and the second floor space above the arcade.



In 2013 the Marquee Room was created in an effort to showcase live entertainment that is more conducive to intimate settings such as small concerts and dinner events.

In November 2013 the renovated second floor space was unveiled as the Marquee Room. This new performing space was completely designed and furnished through the donations of generous individuals, business owners and foundations. The stunning room features a baby grand piano, lounge area and full kitchen, all surrounded by marble, granite and custom millwork.

The Marquee Room was created in an effort to showcase live entertainment that is more conducive to intimate settings.

It is also available exclusively to Stadium sponsors and their guests for private receptions prior to their sponsored event.

Cast and crew...

Since 2001 the Stadium Theatre staff has gradually increased from one paid staff member to twelve paid employees. In addition, an essential force of over 300 dedicated volunteers come together every year keeping the Stadium Theatre operational and affordable for all who wish to attend.



Private receptions are available to our Sponsors and Star Members!

The plot thickens...

The Stadium Theatre's programming philosophy recognizes the importance of offering a world-class venue to regional artists. These artists may not otherwise have the ability to perform in this type of grand setting. The theatre's Encore Repertory Company's production of *Les Misérables* exemplified this rationale. The cast and crew were made up completely of volunteers with regular

full-time jobs, but their passion and talent enabled them to outshine paid traveling productions of the show. Patrons left the theatre in awe of their performance.

The theatre also incorporates professional world touring artists to the programming mix as it enhances the diversity of events and draws patrons from outside the region.

In addition to presenting high-caliber entertainment, the Stadium Theatre also offers a broad spectrum

of educational programming designed to offer children and young adults an opportunity to develop an appreciation for the arts. Morning shows for school children are presented during school hours. Vacation theatre camps and after school theatre programs are always at capacity.

With this plethora of events, the Stadium finds itself bustling with activity almost every day of the year. A fortunate by-product of this constant

programming is the draw of people from outside the region into Woonsocket. As a result, local businesses are experiencing a rise in new traffic throughout the year.

Over the last season the Stadium Theatre engaged over 100,000 patrons from all over Southern New England. It is the largest performing arts organization in Northern Rhode Island and is a pivotal anchor to the revitalization of Woonsocket's downtown district.

Flashback...

The Stadium Theatre has always been a part of a grand vision. When Arthur Darman built the theatre in 1926, he also built the dignified, five-level Stadium Building to compliment and operate in harmony with his grand Theatre.

The Stadium Building was one of the finest structures of its type, completely modern for its time with such cutting edge features as a mail-chute on every



The Stadium Building & Mac-Al Shop in 1927





Above Photo: The Stadium Building's lobby in 1927 with 24-hour elevator staff. **Right Photo:** The Stadium Building's lobby ceiling today.



Photo courtesy of Trig Photography

The Stadium Building's impressive yet unpretentious entrance was, and still is, decorated with colorful tiles brought over from Holland. The walls of the entrance are adorned with polished Tennessee marble and Italian travertine stone. The ceiling is richly inlaid, with a beautiful mural that symbolized the progress of Woonsocket from its founding in 1666 to its industrial prominence in 1927.

The Stadium Building enjoyed many years of prosperity. As was common

with so many Main Street enterprises, the building fell into decline when its boutiques and professionals migrated to the more accessible, enclosed shopping malls and plazas which erupted during the mid 20th century. Most of the offices emptied out in the 1990s, and a few street level shops remained for another decade. Although the theater was saved from abandonment in 1991, the Stadium building continued to languish for another 23 years.



Top Left Photo: Always the epicenter of activity, the Stadium Theatre serves as the rendezvous point for Woonsocket's 1956 Fourth of July parade.



Photo courtesy of Trig Photography

Top Right Photo: A law office in the Stadium Building, circa 1927. **Bottom Left & Bottom Center Photos:** The pristine 4th floor and a state of the art dentist's office in the Stadium Building shortly after construction was completed. **Bottom Right Photo:** A lobby mural as it appears today.



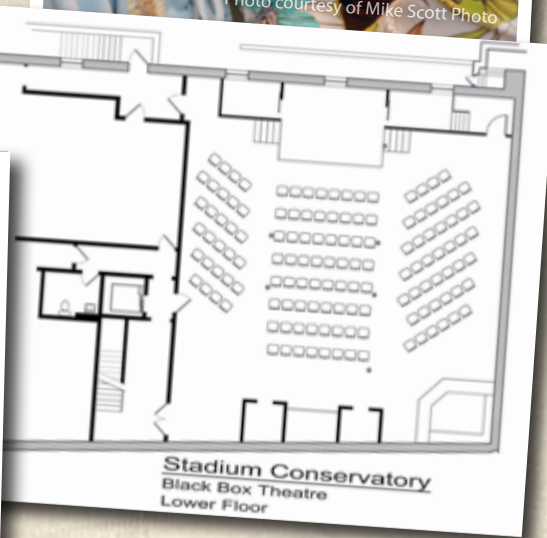
Photo courtesy of Mike Scott Photo

Flashforward...

In 2014 the Stadium Theatre Foundation purchased the 30,000 square foot Stadium Building to accommodate the rapid growth of the Theatre's entertainment and educational programming. This acquired Stadium Building space has been named 'The Stadium Conservatory'. Since the purchase, volunteers came together to clean the new building and move existing props, costumes and sets from a rented warehouse to the Conservatory's lower and street levels. Currently, the Conservatory contains dedicated spaces for costuming, set and prop building.

Today the Foundation is in the midst of a major restoration of the Conservatory. In November 2014, Rhode Island voters passed a state bond to fund a portion of this project. With continued

financial support and a dedicated corps of volunteers, the Stadium Conservatory will soon be home to sizeable rehearsal spaces and performing arts classrooms. It will also feature a recording and photo studio, additional dressing rooms and a 150 seat black box theatre. The Stadium Theatre offices will be moved from their current street level to the fourth floor in order to make room for an expanded box office, theatre gift shop and inviting café.



Stadium Conservatory
Black Box Theatre
Lower Floor

Rendering by DP Architect

Fourth Floor

Theatre offices will be moved from their current street level to the fourth floor. This level will also feature recording and photo studios.

Third Floor

This entire floor will be primarily dedicated to costuming and will include a seamstress shop and dressing rooms for costume fittings. It will also include a prop building shop.

Second Floor

With so many theatre productions and educational programs there is a critical need for rehearsal and classroom space. This level will house rehearsal spaces simulating the theatre stage as well as additional smaller studios.

Street Level

Set design, construction, painting and storage will take place on the first floor. New theatre gift and coffee shops will be constructed and the current box office will be expanded. The store front windows will become tastefully dressed façades with inviting themes.

Lower Level

Half of the lower level will house annex dressing rooms to serve the theatre's stage performers, while the other half will house a 150 seat black box theatre. This performing space will be used for the presentation of original works and small, intimate performances.



THE STADIUM *Conservatory*

Rendering by BETA Engineering

To be continued...

“The success of the Stadium Theatre restoration was due to the giving spirit of generous individuals, foundations and business leaders who rallied together, rising to the challenge to donate time and funding towards this project. It is because of their hard work and dedication that you are now reading this booklet about the Stadium’s history. Had it not been for them, the script would have ended and the Theatre would have been demolished.

Today, we ask that you continue the work and legacy of those individuals who came before you. Your support will enable the Stadium Theatre and Conservatory to continue bringing the power of the performing arts to all of those who wish to participate, whether engaging in our education programs, performing on our stage, volunteering or simply attending any of our outstanding performances. We hope you, too, will take a starring role in our history.”

— *Cathy Levesque,*
Executive Director & CEO




Magnificent sets are created in the Conservatory.



The Conservatory is home to thousands of sets & props.



Our Stadium family welcomes you!

A woman with short blonde hair, wearing a black suit and a name tag, stands on the right side of the image. She is smiling and holding a DVD case. The background is a large, ornate theater with a red stage and blue curtains. The ceiling is decorated with intricate patterns and lights.

"I love volunteering at the Stadium and am honored to serve you. Our team is committed to providing you with the hospitality you deserve!"

— Kathy Fleury

Thank you,
We are here because of *your* support.

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