

Venice Theatre  
Curtains Up! A Grand Restoration!

Since 1950, Venice Theatre has realized its mission of making a dramatic impact on all stages of life. But exercising their purpose to nurture creative expression, to foster human communication and understanding, and to delight and challenge audiences through theatre and the performing arts of the highest quality was halted when Hurricane Ian destroyed the 432-seat Jervey Theatre in September, 2022.

Their **Curtains Up! A Grand Restoration!** initiative will fund new and enhanced stage curtains as a self-contained project within the overall Venice Theatre recovery. The total initiative budget is \$117,531, with the amount beyond the Impact100 SRQ grant to be paid through their Restoration Fundraising campaign. The Impact100 SRQ grant will fund the construction and installation of drapery soft goods for \$68,440 and \$40,560 in necessary hardware.

The Impact100 grant will purchase the Grand Drape and auxiliary curtains including a traveler curtain, used between scenes to block elaborate scene changes from audience view until revealed; white and black scrim that extends across the stage to provide magical effects, scenic perspective, and a sense of time; a cyclorama curved curtain that creates depth and perspective; acoustic drapes that control sound; and a fire curtain.

These curtains frame the action of a play or musical; they are the transformative wall from stage to audience. And these curtains provide a safety barrier in case of emergency. They will create a versatile performance space and enhance the size and quality of the shows. They will feature updated technologies, an expanded fly system, and a variety of drapes and special effects options not previously available, as well as a safer environment for production teams and performers. Expected to last 15 to 20 years, they will provide dramatic impact to the estimated 100,000 patrons, performers and students who will attend performances as the Jervey Stage annually. Their impact will be measured through targeted surveys and personal feedback.

Although the cost of rebuilding the Jervey Stage is not within the scope of this initiative, the initiative cannot be implemented without the reconstruction. Of the total \$13,000,000 reconstruction budget, \$4,540,000 was received from the insurance company; a \$5,000,000 HUD award is pending; and they have also been approved for a \$5,000,000 bridge loan. Ongoing restoration fundraising to date exceeds \$2,500,000. The completion of the new 432-seat theatre is projected for January, 2025, allowing for this initiative's completion within the Impact100 SRQ 24-month grant period, ending November, 2025.

Venice Theatre is a centerpiece of community, culture, education, and resilience for the City of Venice and South Sarasota County. The second largest community theatre in the United States, Venice Theatre is globally respected for providing exceptional theatrical experiences. Their history of success, growth and community engagement will continue to embolden future success.