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MPAC Breaks Ground on Expansion and Restoration Project Includes the new Ilene and Bruce Jacobs Arts & Education Center

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(MORRISTOWN) -- Mayo Performing Arts Center (MPAC) broke ground this morning on a \$65 million expansion and restoration project that signals the dramatic next phase in the evolution of the non-profit arts organization. The project will include construction of the newly announced Ilene and Bruce Jacobs Arts & Education Center and a major restoration of the MPAC theatre.

"Since it began as a single-screen movie theatre in 1937, to its current standing as one of the top 50 Performing Arts Centers worldwide, MPAC has been at the heart of arts and entertainment in the North Jersey region," said Allison Larena, President and CEO, MPAC. "Our expansion and restoration project will be a transformational undertaking that will elevate MPAC and Morristown as the premier arts destination in our state and an economic engine in our region."

In conjunction with the groundbreaking, MPAC is announcing the launch of the public phase of a \$22.5 million campaign to help fund the expansion. "Build Our Future: The Campaign for MPAC" has raised over \$19.8 million to date toward this goal, highlighted by a \$7.5 million lead gift from Ilene and Bruce Jacobs.

Central to the overall project is the new Ilene and Bruce Jacobs Arts & Education Center, which will create a vibrant hub for arts education programs and activities and a dynamic gathering space for the community. The Jacobs Arts & Education Center will enable the organization to grow its already robust and in-demand arts education programs, reduce waiting lists for classes, and create additional art gallery space. Ilene and Bruce Jacobs's generous gift to the Campaign also establishes the Ilene and Bruce Jacobs Arts Education Endowment, which will sustain the newly named Jacobs Performing Arts School, including the Miracle Project, the Performing Arts Company, and the Ilene and Bruce Jacobs Arts Education Scholarships.

"We cannot thank Ilene and Bruce enough for their generous lead gift," said Greg Supron, Chair, MPAC Board of Trustees. "Their gift ensures that thousands of children, who might otherwise not have had the opportunity, will be able to participate in arts education programs for years to come at the new Ilene and Bruce Jacobs Arts & Education Center."

"We believe in the power of the arts to educate, inspire, and bring our community together," said Bruce Jacobs. "It gives us great joy to know that students will continue to benefit from these programs for years to come."

Project plans call for:

The Mayo Performing Arts Center ♦ 100 South Street ♦ Morristown, NJ 07960
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- A 31,000 square foot project, to include the Ilene and Bruce Jacobs Arts & Education Center, which will be home to the Jacobs Performing Arts School, seven studios, and a 150-capacity rehearsal/performance space
- The Starlight Veranda, a new meeting and reception space
- Additional loading bay and new freight elevator
- Renovation of backstage spaces
- Two-tiered parking deck for MPAC staff
- New art gallery space
- Complete restoration of the outdoor plaza and MPAC Theatre
- Additional administrative space

“Our project creates a modest additional footprint, while strategically enlarging and upgrading our existing facility,” Ms. Larena added. “This comprehensive and thoughtful approach serves as the key to keeping MPAC a vibrant and dynamic destination to enjoy world-class performances and creating an expanded and diversified cultural arts education program.”

The expansion will be built on property acquired by MPAC that is located directly behind the theatre. Construction will be completed in approximately 18-24 months. The expansion project has been designed by F.J. Rawding Architecture and Planning.

Restorations will stabilize and restore the theatre’s deteriorated historic fabric and the functionality of the auditorium. They will include replacing seats, comprehensive plaster repair, and restoration of walls and ceilings, including Art Deco decorative finishes, repainting, and more. The theatre’s main lobby and outdoor plaza will receive a refresh as well. This phase of the project will be overseen by Connolly & Hickey Historical Architects, LLC in accordance with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. Final plans will be announced in the future.

In addition to Ilene and Bruce Jacobs, major lead support has been received from: the F. M. Kirby Foundation, the Paragano Family Foundation, The John and Margaret Post Foundation, and the state of New Jersey. In addition, the project was selected as one of only two in New Jersey to date to receive a tax credit award through the New Jersey Economic Development Authority under its Cultural Arts Facilities Expansion (CAFE) Program.

Build Our Future: The Campaign for MPAC Cabinet includes: Honorary Co-Chairs Ilene P. and Bruce I. Jacobs, Co-Chairs Jefferson W. Kirby and Mary Jane Robertson and members William Conger, Anne DeLaney, James E. Hanson II, Marylyn McLaughlin, Eileen Paragano, and MPAC Chairman of the Board of Trustees Gregory Supron.

“With the public’s help, MPAC will continue to be the arts leader in Northern New Jersey and beyond, enriching and empowering lives through the power of performance and arts education,” Mr. Supron added.

[Information on supporting and donating to this project can be found here.](#)

About MPAC Education Programs:

MPAC, including the newly named Jacobs Performing Arts School, is dedicated to providing exceptional arts education opportunities to children and adults of all ages and abilities. Over 35,000 children and their families participate in theatre classes, school time shows, workshops, seminars, student recognition programs, and enrichment opportunities each year. Each program strives to make the performing arts a vital component of every child’s upbringing and to spark a lifelong interest in music, dance and culture. The Jacobs Performing Arts School is generously supported by the Ilene and Bruce Jacobs Arts Education Endowment.

About MPAC

Mayo Performing Arts Center, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, presents a wide range of programs that entertain, enrich, and educate the diverse population of the region and enhance the economic vitality of Northern New Jersey. The 2025-2026 season is made possible, in part, by a grant from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a

Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as support received from the F.M. Kirby Foundation, The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation, Jacobs Levy Equity Management, and numerous other foundations, corporations, and individuals. Mayo Performing Arts Center was named 2016 Outstanding Historic Theatre by the League of Historic American Theatres, and is ranked in the top 50 mid-sized performing arts centers by Pollstar Magazine.

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All Programs Subject to Change.
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