



BACKSTAGE AT THE

Valentine Theatre

SPRING 2024

OUR MISSION

The Toledo Cultural Arts Center, a non profit organization, produces and provides cultural and performing arts experiences for diverse audiences of all ages, to enhance the quality of the cultural and economic life of the City of Toledo, Lucas County, Northwestern Ohio and Southeast Michigan.

OUR HISTORY

The historic Valentine Theatre opened its doors on Christmas Day in 1895 and is currently a 901-seat facility operated by the Toledo Cultural Arts Center, Inc. Following a 21-year effort by the Board of Trustees and the community, the newly renovated theatre was reopened on October 9, 1999. Since then, more than a million people have attended international, national and regional presentations, weddings and events.

CONTACT US



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ValentineTheatre.com



410 Adams Street
Toledo, Ohio 43604



Our 25th Annual Heart to Heart Gala With Paul Shaffer!



On Saturday, March 4th, the Valentine welcomed the multi-talented Paul Shaffer as the headliner for our 25th annual Heart to Heart Gala. The longtime “Late Night with David Letterman” band director and sidekick entertained with a 2-hour plus set of songs from the 60s through today. Capping off the evening was a show-stopping performance by the phenomenally entertaining Thelma Houston, who performed a slew of Motown hits, including her own signature song, “Don’t Leave Me This Way,” which had the audience on their feet and dancing in the aisles! University of Toledo alum J. Ernest Green conducted a fabulous orchestra of 30+ members who never missed a beat. The evening started with complimentary hors d’oeuvres from Georgio’s International Café and a cash bar featuring several Paul Shaffer-inspired drinks like “The Late Night Shaffer” and “It’s Raining Gin” Many thanks to our major sponsor, KeyBank and the Walter E. Terhune Memorial Fund for their generous support, and to our many corporate sponsors and patrons who made the evening such a success. Proceeds from the event help support programming, operations and continued preservation of our historic theatre.



Paul Shaffer with J. Ernest Green. Photo courtesy of The Girl in the Glass City



(l-r) Joel and Clare Gorski, Abby Glanville, Lisa and David Rectenwald Photo: The Girl in the Glass City.



Valentine Theatre Marketing Director Matt Lentz (second from left, back row) with Gala patrons. Photo: The Girl in the Glass City.

A round of applause for our generous sponsors!



Meet Valentine Theatre Intern

Max Nijakowski



St. John's Jesuit senior Max Nijakowski will spend a week here learning the ins and outs of arts administration and theatre operations. Max was here in March for SJJ's spring musical, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, in which he played the character Fieldzig. It was Max's first time performing in a musical and he loved it! While he is here he will spend time with employees learning various aspects of theatre management, including box office sales, shadowing the house manager on show days, watching rehearsals with technical staff, and more. After graduation, Max will attend Bowling Green State University where he plans to pursue a career which reflects his artistic creativity and love of music and the arts. Be sure to look for a follow-up article by Max outlining his intensive experience in our Fall newsletter!

Annual Toledo-Area High School Diversity Program

On March 26, the Jewish Federation of Greater Toledo hosted its 19th annual Diversity Program for more than 850 area middle and high school students here at the Valentine Theatre. Sponsored by the Ruth Fajerman Markowicz Holocaust Resource Center and directed by Hindea Markowicz, this year's guest speaker was Erika Gold, a Holocaust survivor who grew up in Budapest Hungary. Mrs.



Featured speaker Erika Gold

Gold recounted the harrowing story of how she and her mother and father were able to survive the Nazis during World War II. Her presentation included photos of her family's apartment building in Budapest, pictures of her extended family taken before the war (many of whom perished in Hitler's death camps), and the story of how she and her mother escaped from being taken to the death camps by her mother's quick thinking (they quietly jumped off a transport truck) and the bravery of their former housekeeper who kept them hidden in her apartment for months. Once liberated, Mrs. Gold and her mother were reunited with their father who had been sent to work camps. Mrs. Gold later moved to Cleveland where she attended college. Today she travels the country sharing her story and encouraging young people to always remain vigilant against anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination.



Erika Gold speaking to students

26th Anniversary Season Tickets Coming Soon!

Marketing Director Matt Lentz is finalizing the Valentine Theatre's 26th anniversary season. For over a quarter of a century, the historic Valentine Theatre has been the Heart of the Arts, bringing Broadway and more to downtown Toledo. We're excited to present another amazing season of shows. Highlights include the Tony Award-winning musical *Dear Evan Hansen*, *The Cher Show*, perennial favorite *The Addams Family*, pianist Jim Brickman, *The Midtown Men*, and more! Want to ensure the best seats in the house? Become a season subscriber! New subscriptions go on sale in mid-July through our Box Office 419-242-2787. Already a subscriber? Look for your renewal letter in the mail soon!



Around the Theatre with Facilities Manager Bill Colter

Ever wonder how we change the lightbulbs on the theatre's grand chandelier? A few weeks ago Executive Director Abby Glanville photographed Facilities Manager Bill Colter as he did just that. According to Bill there are about 72 frosted globes and he changes bulbs as needed or about three times a year. The chandelier is lowered on a winch which takes about two and a half minutes to fully lower to just above the orchestra seats.



Nettie Poe Ketcham — “The Belle of Toledo”

Humanitarian and International Philanthropist

While many of us may be familiar with the men associated with the Valentine Theatre — owner George Ketcham and his father, Valentine, for whom the theatre was named — one of Toledo’s most impressive woman of the early 20th century, humanitarian and international philanthropist Nettie Poe Ketcham also had ties to the Ketcham family and the Valentine Theatre. Known as “The Belle of Toledo” for her beauty and brilliance, Nettie was born in Toledo on May 30, 1865, to Isaac Newton Poe, a cousin of the poet Edgar Allen Poe, and Elizabeth Smith Poe. Isaac was a merchant and early Toledo pioneer who later went into real estate and banking, serving as a director of Toledo Savings & Loan for 30 years. Her mother, Elizabeth, was an officer of the Protestant Hospital (later known as The Toledo Hospital) who served as its president. It was said by many that the Hospital stood “largely as a memorial to her efforts,” as she worked tirelessly on its behalf.



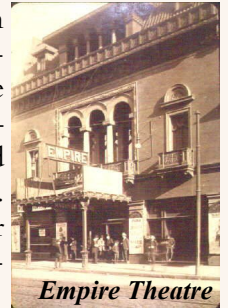
Nettie Poe Ketcham
1865-1950



JNO. B. KETCHAM, 2d.
by Van Lee & Trust

When she was just 20 years old, Nettie married George’s oldest brother, John B. Ketcham, 2nd. John was a banker like his father, Valentine, but unlike his frugal father, he liked the high life and was an avid club man. In fact, he worked with noted Toledo architect David L. Stine to design the first Toledo Club building on Madison and Huron, serving as its first president from 1889–1891. Although John was significantly older than Nettie, by all accounts they appeared well-suited to each other in temperament, and for many years were Toledo’s “golden couple,” living a fast-paced social life that was the envy of many of their peers. Eventually outgrowing Toledo, the two set their sights on Chicago, but the move away would prove tragic. By 1895 their marriage was over in a scandalous divorce with Nettie accusing John of incompetence due to alcoholism; two years later John would be dead under mysterious circumstances, his fortune squandered and his reputation in ruins...but that’s a story for another issue!

After her divorce, Nettie returned to Toledo to start her life anew. As part of her settlement with John, she was given the property north of Toledo’s Trinity Church from St. Clair Street to Jackson Street (the site of Four SeaGate today), and in 1900 she built her own elegant Empire Theatre there, right across from the Valentine! Although she was friendly with her former in-laws, especially her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law, some newspaper accounts suggest she was aggravated with her brother-in-law, George, for dragging his feet in settling her late ex-husband’s estate. Whatever the reason for the “Ketcham Theatre Wars,” Nettie’s Empire Theatre was notable for its sophisticated beauty and because it was designed largely by Nettie herself, one of the few theatres in the country designed and owned by a woman.



Empire Theatre

In 1910 Nettie moved permanently to Switzerland for health reasons. She loved her life there and was adored by the Swiss people for her compassion and generosity. During World War II she opened up her home so it could be used to manufacture clothing for war refugees, and, like her mother, she supported the Swiss Hospital by donating her personal limousine as an ambulance. After the war, she adopted the small town of Heimberg, Switzerland, becoming one of its most beloved denizens. Town leaders eventually made her an honorary citizen in appreciation for all she had done for their community. Nettie never forgot her hometown though. Throughout her life she supported the Toledo Museum of Art, where she helped develop their School of Design and supported art classes for children and women. In 1936, she donated the Swiss Room, a replica of a 17th century Swiss cabin with an authentic tiled stove, which was one of TMA’s most popular exhibits and a favorite of Toledo school children for decades.

When Nettie died in 1950, at the age of eighty-four, she left a sizeable trust to both the Toledo Museum of Art’s School of Design and the Toledo YWCA. Pursuant to her wishes, she was buried in Switzerland in a modest cemetery in Heimberg among the people she loved so dearly. Nettie Poe Ketcham was truly a remarkable Toledoan whose generous spirit, integrity, and humanity continue to inspire us today.

Sources: “Woman’s Will Aids Toledo Museum of Art and YWCA,” Fremont News Messenger, Mar 29, 1950; “Wants His Money Saved,” Chicago Chronicle Sept 29, 1896, p. 1; Toledo Bee, Nov. 14, 1897, p. 1; Toledo Bee Commemorative Issue, 1890; “Nettie Poe Ketcham,” rootsweb.com; “Empire is a Beauty,” Toledo Bee, Oct 13, 1900, p. 7; “Ketchams at War,” Dayton Daily News, May 12, 1900, p. 8; “YWCA, Museum Named in Will,” Akron Beacon Journal, Jan 29, 1950, p. 43; “Life’s Drama: Recent One Enacted by a Rich Toledo Couple,” Grand Rapids Wood County Tribune, Oct 15, 1896, p. 3.



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you are the reason the Valentine continues to be at the forefront of performing arts in downtown Toledo. Whether you have been a longtime patron or just recently discovered our beautiful theatre, your support and patronage help keep the Valentine the heart of the arts in Toledo!

Paying it forward. When you give to the Valentine Theatre's Annual Appeal, you are supporting programming which benefits thousands of school children who attend our Valentine School Days each year. You are supporting our

Show Your Love for the Valentine

Donate to our Annual Appeal Today!

You are the heart of our success. As a friend of the Valentine Theatre,

arts partners the Toledo Opera, Toledo Symphony, and the scores of local musicians, dancers, and actors who perform on our stage, the same stage where legends like John Phillip Sousa, Anna Pavlova, and Lionel Barrymore once performed. When you give, you become part of the Valentine's legacy and have a direct influence in making sure future generations experience the same thrill of live theatre as you do today.

Membership has its perks! As our way of saying thank you, your annual donation entitles you to members-only benefits which include recognition in our program, drink tickets, buy one get one free ticket offers, and more.