



TOWN OF KIAWAH
Arts
& CULTURAL
EVENTS

2023-2024 ANNUAL
REPORT



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF PERFORMING
ARTS EVENTS!

The Work of the Arts Council

2023-2024 Quick Facts



34 Events



6,937
Total Audience
Attendance



\$58,617
Total Revenue



4,837
E-Blast
Subscriptions

Since its creation in 2004, the Arts Council has grown from having 10 events per year with a \$25,000 budget to having more than 30 events a year with a \$300,000 budget. The program could not function without its 10 volunteer members responsible for proposing and selecting each season's events.

With the help of its members, Arts and Cultural Events Coordinator Ruthie Foster facilitates all event operations while offering administrative support and oversight.



"Our mission is to enhance community and tourist appreciation and involvement in performing arts within the Town of Kiaʻwah Island and its environs by providing a diversity of planned programs. We shall strive to ensure that Kiaʻwah is recognized as an arts and culturally-minded community."

A Season in Review

The Arts Council's 2023-2024 season was a milestone, with the group celebrating its 20th anniversary. The core values of balance, diversity, variety, and quality were reflected in the 34 events presented by the Arts Council. From tango and historical theater to jazz and classical, there was something for everyone reflected in the range of programming.

The community's appetite for arts events is displayed in the record-breaking number of sell-outs, attendees, and revenue generated throughout the season. The Arts Council continues to pride itself on presenting a range of local, national, and international artists and its variety of free and paid events.



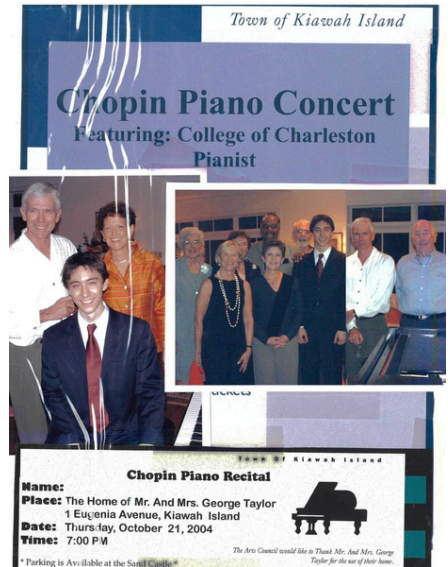
The first half of the season included Alva Anderson's Jazz Quartet, the Charleston Symphony Orchestra, and Lowcountry Voices, which highlighted the immense local talent within the Charleston region.

Taking an international turn, other programs included the Canadian roots duo The Small Glories and the South American dance group Tango Lovers, where audiences experienced an interdisciplinary production like no other. Bluegrass icon Dan Tyminski and his vastly talented band put on an incredible performance, along with the Astralis Chamber Ensemble, who performed holiday favorites.



The second half of the season included the fan-favorite party band Liquid Pleasure and other high-energy favorites such as the Linda Ronstadt Experience, Queens of Rock and Soul, the Will Thompson Band, and the 18th Annual Blues by the Sea festival. Grammy Award-winning Quentin Baxter presented a highly acclaimed jazz series, and the Piano Bar and Art Film series remained a community-building success.

This season, the Arts Council paid tribute to its roots when it hosted renowned pianist Sean Kennard. Sean was a College of Charleston undergraduate student when he performed at the first Arts Council concert in 2004 (original flyer pictured to the right). The Council was honored to have him back for a special anniversary performance and cherished the full-circle moment.



The events listed above are just a fraction of the range of successful programming presented last season. The Arts Council is honored to continue providing quality arts events for the Kiawah community and its visitors.

Audience Preference Survey Summary

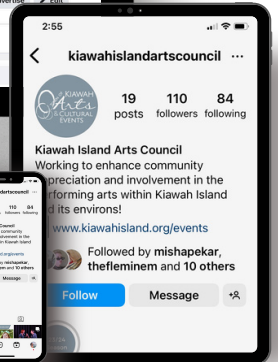
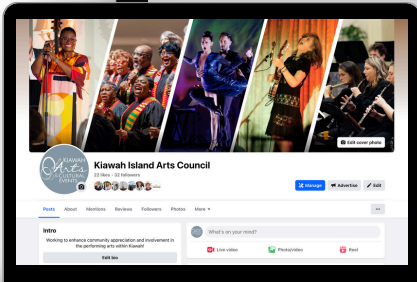
Towards the end of this season, an "Audience Preference Survey" was sent out to the community via e-newsletters and social media posts, and linked to the events webpage. Over the course of a few weeks, it received an outstanding 274 responses. Data was gathered on audience demographics, programming preferences, and any participant feedback. The Council will consider this valuable feedback from the community when planning for future seasons. A few of the survey findings highlights are listed below.

- **66% of the survey respondents were Kiawah Island residents, with the other 34% living off-island.**
- **E-newsletters are the most preferable method for respondents to stay up-to-date with event information.**
- **The majority of respondents were satisfied with current programming quality, variety, and diversity.**
- **When asked about what types of programming they would like to see in future seasons, music was the most popular box checked by 93% of respondents, followed by theater (69%), dance (49%), and film (27%).**
- **When asked about specific music genres they would like to see in future seasons, classical, jazz, rock, country, blues, and pop were notably listed.**
- **The survey included a portion for respondents to offer any open-ended feedback or suggestions for the Arts Council to consider when planning future seasons, and we received 103 valuable responses of varying degrees.**

Social Media Launch

In an effort to better engage with its audiences, the Arts Council has recently launched its own Facebook and Instagram pages. Managed by the Arts and Cultural Events Coordinator, these pages will be useful for promoting upcoming events, showcasing past events, and staying connected with the community.

Both the Facebook and Instagram pages are growing steadily, and there are opportunities to collaborate with the Town social media pages through giveaways and other initiatives.



www.rb.gy/gqsnxo



www.instagram.com/kiawahislandarts council/

New Member Highlights

This season, the Arts Council was lucky to welcome two new members. Read below about the amazing new additions, Rob Cushman and Ron McCray.



Rob Cushman brings a wealth of experience and passion to the Arts Council. With a distinguished background as a former marketing, communications, and public relations partner, Rob has excelled in planning and launching a variety of events. Rob has a deep-seated interest in the arts, encompassing a broad spectrum from classic to modern art. Rob's multifaceted expertise and enthusiasm for the arts make him a valuable addition to the Arts Council.



Ron McCray is a seasoned corporate director, investor, and former CEO who has served on numerous boards and held various executive positions. An active member of the arts community, Ron is vice chairman of Charleston Jazz and serves on the board of the Newport Festivals Foundation. He is also an accomplished musician, playing trumpet and saxophone. His extensive experience and passion for both business and the arts make him an excellent asset to the Arts Council.

Lowcountry Arts Center Update

On September 5, 2023, Webb Management consultants provided Town Council with the final Feasibility Study presentation regarding the potential addition of an art and cultural center.

Following the conclusion of the Feasibility Study, a new group was formed to determine the next steps with a potential center. Named the Lowcountry Arts Center (LAC), this group distinguished itself from the Town and was established as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) in January of 2024.

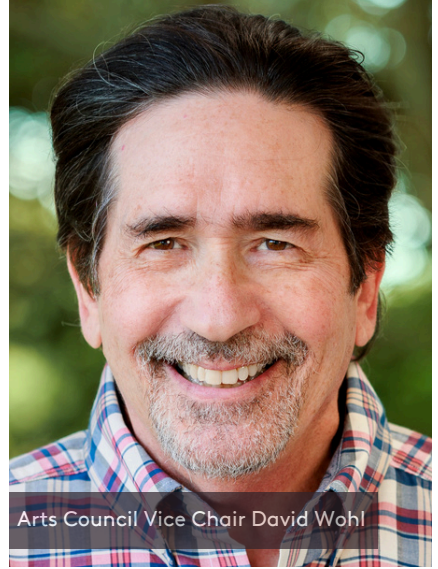
The Board of Directors includes residents of Kiawah Island, Seabrook Island, Johns Island, and Charleston. The newly formed organization is in the very early stages of gauging community support for the project, reviewing the feasibility study, exploring funding possibilities, and examining site potentials.

The long-term mission of the organization is listed below. For further information, contact LAC President David Wohl at dwohl23@gmail.com.

“The Lowcountry Arts Center is a dynamic hub for artistic expression, education and engagement, entertaining and inspiring the Johns Island communities through a variety of exceptional performances, exhibitions, events and educational programs.”

A Thank You From the Arts Council

This season, we are immensely grateful for the support of our community and want to thank our dedicated audiences for consistently attending and championing our events for over 20 years now. Our patron base, largely consisting of Kiawah Island residents, fuels our passion for bettering the community through the arts. This record-breaking season would not have been possible without you all.



We want to thank Mayor Brad Belt, Town Administrator Stephanie Tillerson, and the members of Town Council for recognizing the importance of our work and supporting current and future endeavors. We want to thank our vendors for helping us build a theatre from the ground up for every event. A special thank you to Andrew Higdon from Hope Sound, Matt Varner from Prime Time Productions, Joseph Fox from Fox Music, and Chuck Higgins from Production Design Associates (PDA). We want to thank our venues for working with us to help schedule events. A special thank you to Barbara Steele at the Kiawah Island Golf Resort, Amy Cook at the Sandcastle, Michelle Duplessis at the Seabrook Island Clubhouse, Teri Hiers and Tom Hample at Church of our Saviour, Mackenzie Battle at Holy Spirit Catholic Church, and the Freshfields Village team.

Lastly, we thank our fellow Arts Council members who volunteer their time and expertise for each event. From initially proposing artists to helping on the day of the event, they are present every step of the way. The success of the program can be attributed to their dedication and passion alone. We cannot wait for another successful Arts and Cultural Events season. Cheers to 20 more years!

David Wohl, Vice Chair

Bill Blizard

Becky Hilstad

Jodi Rush

Joan Collar

Kristin Thompson

Dylan Keith

Kimberly Adele

Rob Cushman

Ron McCray



A special thanks to Arts Council member Dylan Keith of Kiawah Sands Photography for providing the photos within this report.

2023-2024 Highlights



Alva Anderson



Arts Council Member Kimberly Adele



The Linda Ronstadt Experience



Clara Camacho



Astralis Chamber Ensemble



Arts Council Members Bill Blizard and Jodi Rush