



2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT

Moisture
SEATTLE
FESTIVAL





Photos by Michelle Bates, Catching Flight Dreams, Rob Falk, Vitz Photography, Sanderling Photography

Introduction: Looking Back to Look Ahead



Over the past year, I've found myself thinking often about continuity: what it means to sustain something beloved while still allowing it to evolve. Moisture Festival has always thrived on that balance. There are traditions audiences return for year after year—the atmosphere of joyful absurdity, astonishing feats of artistry, the sense that anything might happen onstage—and there is also the constant reinvention that keeps the Festival vibrant, surprising, and alive.

This year felt like an important step forward in that process. After many months of conversations, surveys, workshops, and reflection, we completed a formal Strategic

Planning consultation that will guide the organization over the years ahead. I'm grateful to the artists, volunteers, audience members, donors, staff, and community partners who contributed their ideas, candor, and aspirations to that process. The resulting plan gives us not just a clearer sense of direction, but a stronger shared understanding of who we are, what we value, and what we hope Moisture Festival can become. In the coming year, I look forward to sharing more about the action planning work that grows from this foundation and the many ways our community can help shape and support it.

At the same time, this year reminded us that thoughtful planning only matters if it translates into lived experience: full houses, meaningful artistic encounters, sustainable operations, and moments of genuine connection and delight. I'm thrilled to report that we exceeded our fundraising expectations during the Festival season, thanks to the extraordinary generosity of hundreds of individual donors who responded to our calls for support. Combined with the operational efficiencies we began implementing the previous year, that support brought us remarkably close to a break-even budget—an important milestone that speaks both to careful stewardship and to the commitment of this community to the Festival's future.

And what a joyful Festival season it was!

This year we welcomed 35 acts appearing at Moisture Festival for the first time, bringing fresh perspectives, extraordinary skills, and new creative energy into our orbit. We installed a newly designed pin rail system that has made our aerial rigging process both safer and more efficient backstage. We experimented with several bespoke audience experiences, including, among other things, some quite peculiar juggling involving squirrels on sticks—a sentence I suspect could only appear in a Moisture Festival annual report.

As ever, none of this would be possible without the volunteers who sustain this organization with ingenuity, humor, and an astonishing willingness to do whatever needs doing. Our Volunteer Team Leads and crews continue to embody the very best of this Festival: seriousness of purpose paired with irrepressible playfulness. They show up ready to solve problems, support artists, welcome audiences, move furniture, hang lights, manage lines, sweep floors, calm nerves, and occasionally do all of it while wearing sequin jackets, elaborate headdresses, improbable quantities of fishnet, or full clown regalia. The Festival's sense of community is not accidental—it is created, night after night, by people who care deeply about making this strange and beautiful event possible.

One of the highlights of the year for me was the launch of our inaugural series of Relaxed Performances. From the earliest planning conversations through to the performances themselves, artists, staff, and volunteers came together with tremendous care and thoughtfulness to help us extend a more inclusive welcome to audience members who might benefit from additional support, flexibility, or information in order to fully enjoy a live variety show experience. It was so moving to watch those matinee performances sell out and to welcome hundreds of new audience members into the Festival community. Expanding accessibility and inclusion is ongoing work, but this felt like a meaningful beginning.

As I look toward our 2027 Festival season, I feel an increasing sense of excitement and possibility. We'll be returning to Broadway Performance Hall—a venue that feels like home to many of us now—and continuing to explore new ways of sharing the wonder, laughter, and sense of connection that Moisture Festival creates so uniquely. The world continues to ask a great deal of arts organizations and of the people who sustain them. But year after year, I'm reminded that what we build together here is genuinely rare: a space for risk, joy, eccentricity, artistry, generosity, and community.

Thank you for helping make it possible.

V.

It has been my honor to be Artistic Director of the Moisture Festival for the past two years. I'm delighted to report that the creative, joyful, and wildly wacky atmosphere that the festival founders created continues to draw world class talent from across the globe. The show that Ron Bailey, Tim Furst and collaborators presented in a circus tent in 2004 has blossomed into North America's largest and longest running variety festival. They led the way and I am happy to call them my friends and mentors.

Our 2026 season showcased many 'new to the festival' performers and we brought back many of our festival favorites. We also want to feature the next generation, increase our diversity and continue to expand the definition of variety performance. This year we presented more women variety artists than ever before. We are working hard to bring in more BIPOC performers. The beauty of presenting variety shows is highlighting amazing skills and artistry from a diverse group of artists.

The vast majority of our performers surveyed said they would love to return to the Moisture Festival. Many artists say it's their favorite gig of the year and the audience and ambiance can't be beat. The incredible relationship between audience, performers and volunteers is one of the most gratifying aspects of doing this work. I believe we are moving steadily toward what we have put forward in our vision statement "to be recognized as a world-renowned destination variety arts festival that fosters connectedness and celebrates the human spirit".

Together, let's keep spreading the Magic!!!!

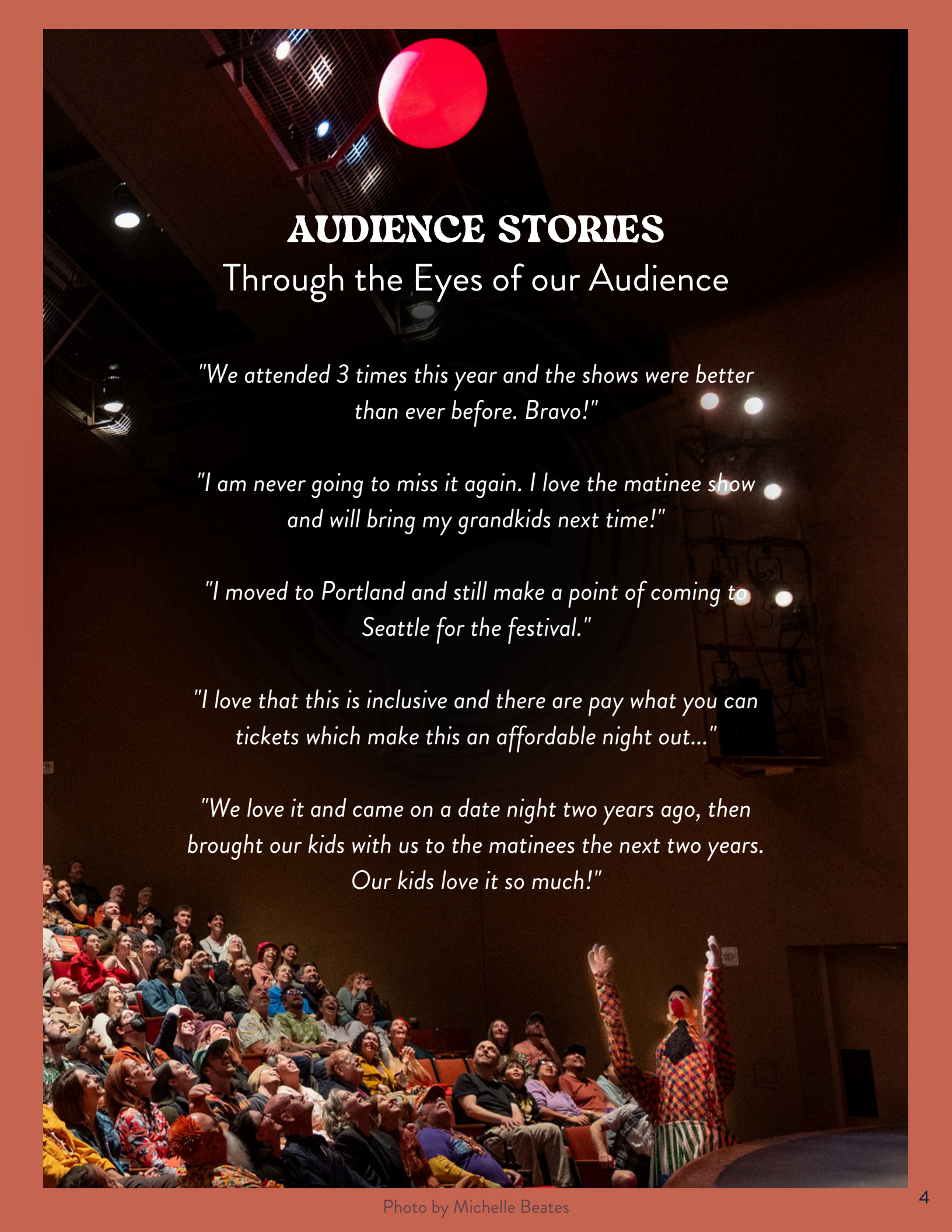
Harry





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AUDIENCE STORIES

Through the Eyes of our Audience

"We attended 3 times this year and the shows were better than ever before. Bravo!"

"I am never going to miss it again. I love the matinee show and will bring my grandkids next time!"

"I moved to Portland and still make a point of coming to Seattle for the festival."

"I love that this is inclusive and there are pay what you can tickets which make this an affordable night out..."

"We love it and came on a date night two years ago, then brought our kids with us to the matinees the next two years. Our kids love it so much!"

VOLUNTEERS-The People Behind the Magic



Many of our volunteers out front of Broadway Performance Hall attending our Grazie Party after our last show of the season

The heart of Moisture Festival has always been its volunteers. This year, rather than sharing a collection of brief quotes, we invited two volunteers who stepped into brand-new roles to reflect on what the Festival means to them. Their stories capture the creativity, connection, and community that make Moisture Festival possible.

Dan – Front of House & Relaxed Performance Lead

I first volunteered with Moisture Festival after my friends Paul Bullard and Ed Lammi encouraged me to get involved. Knowing and respecting both of them, I was curious to learn more. Once I discovered it was a welcoming, volunteer-driven arts organization with such a strong sense of community, I was happy to join.

Over the years I've served in a variety of Front of House roles, with a particular focus on ADA seating and guest services. This year, I helped support the Festival's new Relaxed Performances—working with Ed, Sarah, Vicki, and Jenna to expand accessibility and create an even more welcoming experience for guests of all abilities.

One moment that has always stayed with me was when Carolina recognized me and reconnected with me in the volunteer hospitality room. For someone so generous to remember me reinforced what I've come to believe: Moisture Festival is built by people who genuinely care about one another.

Volunteering allows me to combine my passion for the arts with my commitment to accessibility and service. Especially at a time when arts organizations face growing challenges, it's meaningful to contribute my experience to an inclusive community like Moisture Festival."

Chancy – Production Assistant

I first attended Moisture Festival years ago when a friend was performing a campy can-can number. After experiencing the whimsical performances, elaborate costumes, and welcoming spirit of the Festival, I was hooked. Moisture Festival pushes all my happy buttons.

Since then, I've watched it grow into something truly magical—a blend of world-class performers and an enthusiastic community creating an unforgettable experience together.

This year I volunteered as a Production Assistant, a role that gave me a backstage view of the show's moving parts while allowing me to work directly with performers and crew. David set me up for success, and I loved being part of the team.

Volunteering has become a priority in my life. I actually plan my schedule so I can travel to Seattle each spring to support and attend Moisture Festival. One of my favorite parts is connecting with performers. A memorable example was meeting a yo-yo artist making his first trip to Seattle. After sharing a few local recommendations, he followed up later to tell me about the places he'd visited. Those kinds of connections are part of what makes the Festival so special.

Moisture Festival has become family. The artists are extraordinarily talented, kind, collaborative, and humble. The volunteers are just as passionate and dedicated. I've never experienced another arts community quite like it.



Photo by John Cornicello

PERFORMER STORIES

What this year's artists are saying

**My experience at
Moisture Festival
lived up to its
reputation as one
of the most
rewarding artistic
opportunities
around. The
artists, producers,
and volunteers at
every level were
an absolute
delight to work
with.**

-Lucy Juggles



Moisture
FESTIVAL

Rob Falk
Photography

Photo of Lucy Juggles by Rob Falk

“As a first-generation performer working primarily in traditional family circuses, I have had to work hard to prove I have the right to exist in the space I occupy. At Moisture Festival, artists are celebrated for who they are, on their own terms and in their own style.

I love not only performing, but watching the shows and seeing things I've never seen before. It really is a privilege to be a very small part of a festival that brings together so many people of different skills and backgrounds to celebrate human excellence. The audiences are also some of the most receptive a performer could ask for”.

“The welcoming, creative environment was a joy to be a part of. Sharing the stage with performers I have admired for years was an honor. Everyone was kind and helpful and made me feel like my art was valued. The photos and videos MF provided will be so helpful in promoting my career going forward.”

“Moisture Festival is one of my favorite types of shows—composed entirely of people who are passionate about what they do and want to share it with the world.”

BY THE NUMBERS

SEATS FILLED:

6000 with 917 highly discounted or free tickets provided



SHOWS

26

STAR DONATIONS
AT THE SHOW:

34

ACTS

85

INDIVIDUAL
ARTISTS

144

1,003 volunteer
shifts filled

VOLUNTEERS:

209

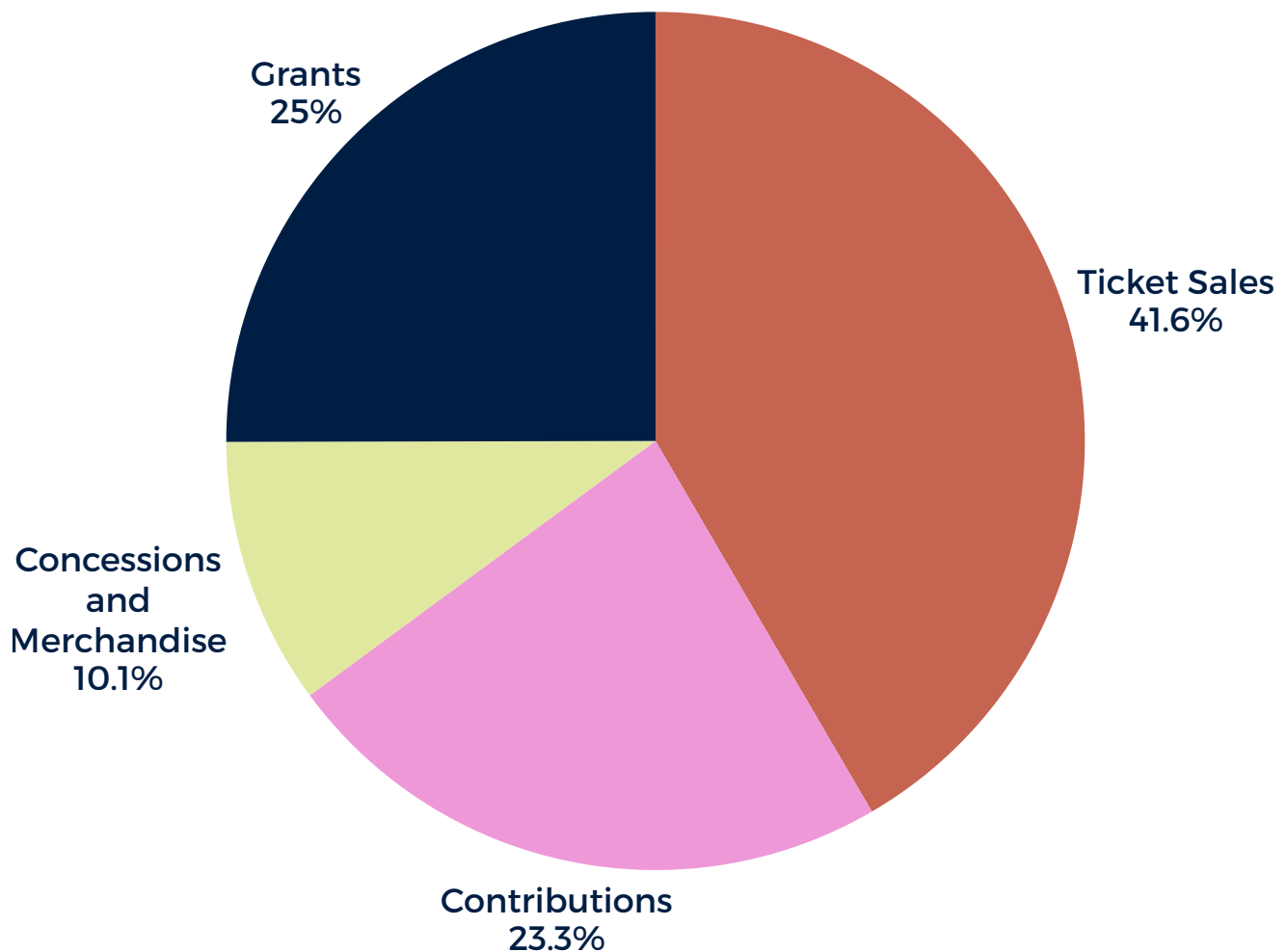
VOLUNTEER HOURS:

over 4000



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Support & Revenue

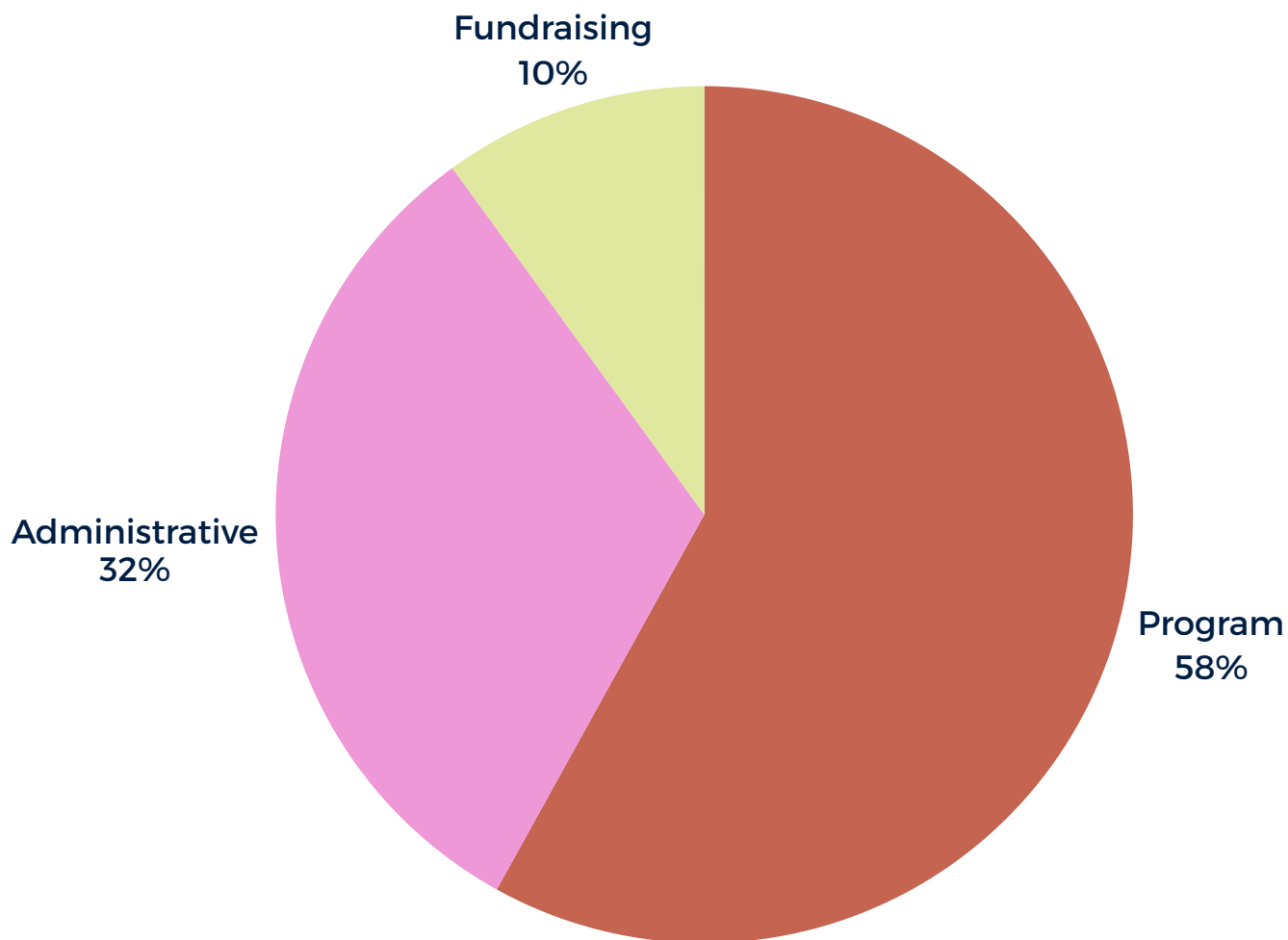


Revenues

Ticket Sales: \$178,880
Grants: \$107,665
Contributions: \$100,234
Concessions: \$32,164
Merchandise: \$11,139

TOTAL REVENUE: \$ 430,082

EXPENSES



Expenses

Program Expenses: \$263,536

Administrative: \$145,099

Fundraising: \$45,403

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$454,038

KEY PARTNERS

PARTNERSHIPS

Moisture Festival was pleased to continue and expand several valued community partnerships throughout the year. We returned for a second year at the Northwest Folklife Festival, bringing our distinctive brand of live entertainment to Seattle Center audiences over Memorial Day weekend. We also continued our long-standing partnerships with SANCA and ECTA, strengthening connections within the regional circus arts community.

Our partnership with Old Stove Gardens continued to grow as they hosted Open Stage events in August, December, and March, along with our annual volunteer orientation.

Their welcoming venue has become an important gathering place for performers, volunteers, and audiences, and we look forward to continuing the series in the coming year.

We also expanded our community outreach through partnerships with Academia Latina, where Mr. Lo led a paper arts workshop before welcoming participants to a Festival performance, and Lambert House, where LGBTQIA+ teens enjoyed a juggling workshop with Lucy Juggles followed by an evening at the Festival. These collaborations reflect our commitment to making the joy, creativity, and wonder of Moisture Festival accessible to an ever-wider community.

PROGRAM GRANTS

Sustained Support: 4Culture
Public Free Access Grant: 4Culture

2026 SPONSORS



SUPPORT THE NEXT ACT OF MOISTURE FESTIVAL

MONTHLY GIVING

Become a monthly donor and provide reliable support that helps Moisture Festival present world-class variety arts, expand accessibility, and keep performances affordable for our community.

EMPLOYER MATCHING

Multiply the impact of your donation. Many employers match charitable contributions made by their employees and retirees. Check with your employer to see if your gift qualifies.

DONOR ADVISED FUNDS

Recommend a grant from your Donor Advised Fund to support Moisture Festival. Giving through your DAF is a simple, tax-efficient way to invest in the future of Moisture Festival

LEGACY GIVING

Leave a lasting legacy by including Moisture Festival in your will, trust, or estate plans. Your future gift helps ensure that generations to come will experience the joy, creativity, and community that define the Festival.

SUPPORT US ALL YEAR

Stay connected and support Moisture Festival throughout the year.

July–September • Donate an item to our Holiday Auction

November • Bid in our Holiday Online Auction

Giving Tuesday • Join our annual giving campaign

January–February • Become a STAR Donor

March–April • Experience Moisture Festival



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOARD OFFICERS



Dan Shih – President

A former performer with a Boston musical-comedy troupe, Dan's appearances are now mainly in court as a civil-litigation attorney. But he's still a tremendous fan of live theater. Between attending shows, Dan also serves on the boards of PRX and the Center for Children & Youth Justice.



Jamie Marshall – Vice President

After several years as a faithful audience member Jamie decided to join the fun at the Moisture Festival. He performed a variété of tasks until he found his calling as bar manager for Broadway Performance Hall and special events. This position brings the opportunity to meet the fine audience members and benefactors and see fabulous Moisture festival performances--and provides a reason to have a four-tap kegerator in his basement eleven months of the year.



Walter Harley – Secretary

Walter has been running Moisture Festival sound since 2013, and long before that for Circus Contraption, Cafe Nordo, Teatro Zinzanni, and Baltimore's Ad Hoc Fiasco. He believes that a smoothly run organization is the safety net that lets performers take risks and make zany art on stage. When not behind a sound board, he is an amateur musician and an aspiring aerialist.



Joe Murphy – Treasurer

Joe discovered theatrical circus in the early aughts and has spent much of his free time since trying to soak up as much comedy, circus, and theater as he can. Joe works in video game technology, but has prior experience in accounting, theater tech, digital media, and projection design. He joined the Moisture Festival Board to contribute in any way he can.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Maque daVis

A former disreputable circus owner, known to indulge in absurdist theater, and seeking to be defamed before his time. He helps around the house, seeks an audience that survives intense laughter, and is curious in what is beyond their reach. Often he asks himself; why now and do you have your ticket yet?



Michael Froebe

Michael Froebe was born in Seattle and raised backstage of various local community theatres. After presenting little experience and high enthusiasm he found volunteering in live performance venues to be a passion and eventually decided the weirdness and hilarity of the Seattle Moisture Festival is a great pairing. Long Live Laughter!!



Anne Gavzer

Anne has volunteered for the Moisture Fest since the way back days, selling tickets in the rain, decorating port-o-potties, doling out snacks and other fun tasks. Twenty years of volunteering has prepared her for her current turn on the board. She also serves on the board of the New Old Time Chautauqua, a likeminded non-profit that has collaborated with the Moisture Festival. Anne is a clothing designer and boutique owner.



Bob Greco

Bob Greco is a local software entrepreneur and investor in Seattle since 1980. He enjoys dancing and playing melodeon for the MossyBack Morris Men, a Seattle dance team.



Maki Muilenburg

Maki has been a lifelong enthusiast of novelty, live music, and variety arts. A mental health therapist by day, she packs as much fun into her off time as possible. Maki loves the unique city she grew up in and takes full advantage of local arts and culture, typically with as many friends as she can convince to join her.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Amy Neuburger

Moisture Festival has proven the best place for Amy to live her core values—celebrating the human spirit through prioritizing self-expression and fun. Amy is (in no particular order) an aerialist, graphic designer, tennis player, mother/wife, traveler, ant keeper, burner, organizer, and party planner.



George Ptasinski

George Ptasinski joined the Moisture Festival Board this year and can also be found slinging drinks with flair on the Bar Team. A longtime fan of fermentation, he runs Republic of Cider in Seattle's SoDo neighborhood, where he brings a brewer's creativity to craft cider. With over 25 years of international business experience—and a law practice focused on IP and regulatory work—George knows how to keep things both orderly and effervescent.

Join our Board of Directors

The Seattle Moisture Festival Board of Directors is actively seeking passionate, diverse, and experienced board members to help guide our nonprofit organization. We are especially seeking professionals in Fundraising/Development, Accountancy, and Human Resources.



OUR MISSION



The Seattle Moisture Festival builds community by championing the variety arts and creating shared experiences of laughter, delight, and wonder.

Our annual showcase celebrates diverse artists, engages our volunteers and contributors, and marvels audiences of all ages.

OUR VISION

To be recognized as a world-renowned destination variety arts festival that fosters connectedness and celebrates the human spirit.

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