



THE NEA GRANT REPLACEMENT GOAL: \$25,000 IN THIRTY DAYS FOR THIRTY YEARS OF JAZZ.

DONATE NOW!

Doubtless, many of you heard the news that recently, due to shifting administration priorities, **the NEA rescinded the “We Always Swing”® Jazz Series \$25,000 “Grants For Arts Project” award.** We submitted the NEA Grant in February 2024 to help support of a major 30th Anniversary Season project – an April 30, 2025, International Jazz Day Concert with the home-grown **18-piece Columbia Jazz Orchestra** performing the music of, featuring and under the direction of the great **saxophonist Bobby Watson.**

In addition to the much-anticipated performance, **the grant support, in part, allowed the Jazz Series to hire a professional film and audio team to record and produce a full-concert film and an accompanying documentary, featuring a personalized, behind-the-scenes look at multiple rehearsals as well as interviews with CoJo musicians, Jazz Series staff and others.** The documentary, once completed, will tell a behind-the-scenes story and all that went into the project, which we now know culminated with a special, unquestionably exceptional and well-received performance.

Obviously, the abrupt and unanticipated \$25,000 loss shocked us, particularly because the NEA sent initial conditional award approval in November 2024, followed, in mid-January 2025, notice reiterating our award status. The latter communiqué included the agency’s official national press release that had gone out; content included a comprehensive state-by-state recipient list, along with, in part, the following introductory text:

Dear NEA Grantee Organization,

*We are so pleased that your organization is included in today’s NEA grant announcement. I emailed a template release last week that you may use in sharing the news about your NEA grant. **The announcement is live on our website** and your award is included in our Recent Grant Search. [Ed: The “Recent Grant Search” Link is now disabled.]*

Feel free to share your news at any time. [sic].

Subtracting \$25,000 “overnight” from the Jazz Series annual budget has had, as people might imagine, a measurable impact. In our specific situation, fully anticipating the NEA funds, the April 30 concert at the Missouri Theatre took place as scheduled with the performance filmed and recorded. The documentary piece is now in the post-production/editing phase. The Jazz Series has covered all the project expenses to date and will continue to do so. This includes paying CoJo’s 18-musicians a fair wage; paying Mr. Watson an appropriate Artist Fee for someone of his stature; hiring the film and recording crew; venue rental; other production costs as well as promotional and marketing-related costs.

Nonetheless, we remain steadfast about completing what turns out to be a \$65,000 project.

So, what happens next? Luckily, three years ago we started The **“We Always Swing”® Jazz Foundation Fund**, created to provide ongoing financial security for the organization. The ultimate goal: The fund’s continued growth so much so, that it ensures the Jazz Series continues in perpetuity. The fund, while growing, remains modest. Right now, our only option is to withdraw money from the foundation to counter the \$25,000 hole in our budget.

But that's where you, our donors, can step in. **Beginning TODAY** and during the next 30 days, we are looking to replace at least, but hopefully more than, the \$25,000 we must now pull from the foundation. During this short-term campaign, when you give, we want you to not only think about the donation as a way to show your support for the current CoJo/Watson Project but also realize every dollar you give is a dollar that helps maintains – and will increase - the foundation's impact. We hope this financial setback also spread awareness about the still relatively new Jazz Foundation Fund and encourages folks to show their support for it so we can protect the Jazz Series against the increased uncertainty in securing public and government-based funding.

If you attended the concert, then you know what a special night of music you were able to enjoy. If you support the arts in general or just want to step in to help when you feel like the NEA, by way of the administration, failed the Jazz Series, then please consider making a gift as well as encouraging your friends and others to join you. In great part, thanks to your support we have produced exceptional events for THREE DECADES. Whether you are a regular Jazz Series contributor, or measurable time has passed since you last contributed, or perhaps you have yet to make a gift to the Jazz Series, your generosity today and during the next 30 days, will surely help ensure we can continue to do deliver “the goods” for 30 more years.

Thank You For Your Ongoing Support.
We Would Not Be Here Without You.

-The Jazz Series Team