

Byrd Theatre in Carytown to raise ticket prices, install new seats

By BRANDON SHULLEETA Richmond Times-Dispatch | Posted: Tuesday, December 13, 2016 10:45 pm

The iconic Byrd Theatre in Richmond's Carytown will increase its movie ticket prices to \$4 for most showings, and to \$5 for others, to help fund major renovations, including new seats.

The higher prices, up from the current \$1.99, will take effect Jan. 1. Renovations will remain ongoing, with new seats slated to be installed in the second quarter of 2017.

"It's got a lot of soul, because so many generations of Richmonders have come here," said Guy Adamson, a member of the Byrd Theatre Foundation's development committee.

Adamson said the foundation wants to keep the Byrd Theatre "experience" for as many people as possible, which means the nonprofit had to settle on pricing that was affordable but high enough at least to pay partially for upkeep.

"It's a historical treasure for the city of Richmond, and if we lose this thing, that would be irreplaceable and such a loss to the whole metropolitan community," he said.

Second-run movies and family classics are expected to remain the staple showings at the theater, and tickets for those movies will be \$4.

The ticket cost will be \$5 for repertory films, including series that fall under the categories of "Midnights," "Cinema for Cinephiles" and "Hollywood Favorites."

For more than 20 years, tickets have sold for \$1.99 at the Byrd, a glamorous 1,300-seat theater built in 1928. While leaders of the nonprofit Byrd Theatre Foundation emphasized the beauty and rich history of the iconic building, they also noted the significant need for renovations.

The torn, outdated, tight-fitting seats of yesteryear have been a chief focus of the foundation as it works to restore the theater "to its former grandeur," as the Byrd's website puts it.

While new seats might be the most apparent change for patrons, other planned enhancements include renovations of restrooms, exterior restoration, updated wiring, carpet replacement, box office and concession renovations, and updated handicap accessibility, including bathroom and theater seating.



20161214_MET_BYRD_JW04

The Byrd Theatre in Carytown will undergo upgrades including replacing the seats, renovating the restrooms, replacing the carpet, updating handicap access, and renovating the box office and concessions stand.

The foundation also announced Tuesday that credit cards now will be accepted for any ticket or concession purchase; previously, the theater accepted only cash. The foundation is in the process of updating its system to allow for online ticket purchases as well.

The Byrd Theatre Foundation was created in 2007 to reinvigorate the facility. Since then, improvements have included a new roof, a new sound system, new digital projection equipment, and a new heating and air-conditioning system.

Gibson Worsham, president of the Byrd Theatre Foundation, said the \$1.99 ticket price is not sustainable.

Worsham said it's possible there could be more first-run movies at the Byrd in the future. He said the theater would have to charge at least \$7 per ticket for first-run movies, considering how expensive it is to buy the rights to show new films.

"That's definitely on the table," Worsham said, adding that there are theaters that show a mix of first- and second-run movies.

The Byrd Theatre Foundation summarized its plans to a group of reporters Tuesday evening. The official public announcement is scheduled for Thursday.

For more information about the Byrd Theatre or to donate, visit www.byrdtheatre.com.