

SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA

South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, & Tourism FY25 Final Report Summary

From May 23-June 8, 2025, Spoleto Festival USA turned Charleston into a cultural epicenter, with more than 45,000 tickets issued and 120+ performances in opera; theater; dance; and chamber, symphonic, choral, jazz, Americana, and folk music. This season, ticket sales exceeded \$3 million - welcoming patrons from around the globe, country, and Southeast. Spoleto Festival remains a large driver of the South Carolina economy, with over 65% of audience members hailing from South Carolina. This year, the Festival employed more than 300 full-time, part-time, and seasonal employees, and over 380 artists, spending approximately \$800,000 on accommodations for visiting staff and artists, yielding close to \$100,000 in accommodations tax. In 2024, 23,173 unique attendees came to Charleston specifically for Spoleto (83.2% stated the festival was their primary reason for visiting), and 50% of attendees were from outside the Charleston tri-county region. Since its inception in 1977, Spoleto Festival USA has had an estimated \$1.4 billion collective economic impact.

Through various community engagement initiatives, the Festival continued to reach broader audiences through programs such as the Open Stage Door program, donating nearly 500 tickets to 23 non-profit and service organizations in Charleston, such as Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, HEART Inclusive Arts Community, We Are Family, and the Canterbury House, among others; the Artists in Schools program in which musicians and artists hosted masterclasses and educational conversations for early-childhood students to young adults.

With support from the state of South Carolina, through the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, Spoleto presented a successful 2025 season offering world-class performance experiences. Spoleto Festival USA and its patrons continue to uplift and support strategic public investment that builds legacy infrastructure, creates enduring partnerships, and strengthens South Carolina's position as a world-class cultural destination. Plans for Spoleto Festival USA's 50th Anniversary Festival in 2026 are underway, marking a half-century of artistic excellence that showcases all that South Carolina does best: hospitality, creativity, and cultural leadership.