

Pittsburgh Symphony Posts Surplus

Rising ticket sales and attendance has helped to propel the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (PSO) to not just fiscal solvency -- but to a surplus.

The PSO announced on November 19 that its 2024-2025 fiscal year is ending with a surplus of \$2.3 million.



"These results are more than financial metrics --- they represent people reconnecting with live performance," said Anthony Buc-

ci, Board Chair, in the announcement. "The PSO's surplus budget and record revenues underscore the success of our long-term strategy: to invest in people, programming, and partnerships that make the arts essential to Pittsburgh's identity and future.

Total ticket sales were up 17% with BNY Classical Series single-ticket revenue up nearly 20%. Attendance grew by 5%.

Many orchestras across the country haven't been fairing as well. The prestigious **Mid-Columbia Symphony** --- a cultural mainstay

in eastern Washington State since 1945 --- may be facing its final season. "A \$200,000 shortfall forced the symphony to trim its upcoming schedule," [reports Wendy Culverwell for the Tri-City Herald](#). Two of Florida's [oldest symphonies](#) have already shut down.

To learn more, [read the entire announcement](#).



PCA Changes

Important changes are occurring with [Pennsylvania Creative Industries](#), the **Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council** (GPAC), has learned and revealed.

A component of the **Pennsylvania Council of the Arts** (PCA), the entity's mission is to "empower, connect, and amplify creatives and creative industries and their contributions to Pennsylvania's communities, economy and workforce." Creative Industries' has used a partnership model in its operation. GPAC is the local partner.

Other changes including ending the Flex Fund and replacing it with a new grant program.

"The Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council is deeply disappointed to learn of this change from the state arts council, particularly since neither we nor other regional partners were consulted before the decision was made," [says](#)

The contentious Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) "doesn't exist" a government official told Reuters.

Dozens of [federal agencies were targeted by DOGE](#), including those supporting the nation's arts and cultural assets. Primary targets were programs that ran afoul of the controversial **Heritage Foundation's** positions as laid out in its [Project 2025 proposal](#). These include the organization's vocal opposition to LGBTQ rights, public

[GPAC's Patrick Fisher in a blog post](#). "We are concerned about how this shift will affect the arts field, not just in Southwestern Pennsylvania, but across the state.

Several local nonprofit arts organizations are expected to rethink how they apply for future state support.

DOGE Shuts Down

media and what is commonly known as 'DEI' initiatives in education, employment and the arts.

A frequently [updated blog](#) about the local impact continues to be operated by the **Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council**.

DOGE and its cuts have become increasingly unpopular. The non-profit **Partnership for Public Service** recently [released research](#) that "the number of people who say they are noticing their effects" has been growing.

Elaine Kamarek of the **Brookings Institution** has published [a de-tailed look](#) what is known about DOGE's actions and the possible repercussions.

According to Reuters, the Office of Personnel Management is taking over DOGE's functions.

Post-Gazette Strike Finally Ends — Sort Of

It has taken three years, multiple court rulings and lots of hurt feelings. But it looks like the long strike by the **Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh** (NGP) against **Block Communications' Pittsburgh Post-Gazette** is over.

Members of the NGP voted 21 to 4 on November 13 to end the walkout, reports the strikers' web site [Union Progress](#). This happened less than a week after an appeals court ruled against the family-owned company by upholding an administrative law judge's decision that the Blocks violated the [National Labor Relations Act](#).

"The Blocks' shameless attempts at union busting failed again,"

said [Jon Schleuss](#) of the **Communication Workers of America** (CWA). "What the Blocks --- and all owners like them --- need to understand is that they cannot



break the law. We are stronger, braver and more principled than any boss can possibly imagine. [We stand] ready to support every journalist and all of our members in whatever it takes, however long it takes." NGP is affiliated with CWA.

But this doesn't necessarily mean they'll be welcome back. The Block's have vowed to file another appeal and there are several replacement staff at the paper.

"There is a lot of work that still needs to be done," NGP President Andrew Goldstein told [KDKA-TV's Ricky Sayer](#). "Just because the strike is over, it doesn't mean that the situation is going to be perfect."

The nation's longest active strike may be over, but it may have a lasting effect on newspapers across the country. Sarah Scire, of **Harvard University's** Nieman Foundation for Journalism, has [published a detailed review](#) of the lessons learned.

ISC Opens New Home

The new headquarters for the **International Sculpture Center** (ISC) has officially opened in the city's Bloomfield neighborhood.

International Sculpture Center
Publisher of Sculpture magazine

Begun as a series of workshops at the **University of Kansas** in 1960, the **ISC** had been based in Hamilton, New Jersey at a park known as the Grounds for Sculpture. The organization's mission is "to champion the creation and understanding of sculpture and its unique, vital contribution to society."

The International Sculpture Center, [reports WESA-FM's Bill O'Driscoll](#), boasts 4,000 members in 40 countries. Pittsburgh came

into consideration after an ISC conference held in the city in 2016.

"I just fell in love with" Pittsburgh, executive director Johannah Hutchison told O'Driscoll. "This is like a vibrant hub. It's affordable for artists. This is what our organization is about."

The building includes a storefront that will be used as a gallery, with offices and other resources on the floor above.



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GPAC Readies New Membership Program

A new membership program is being tested by the **Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council** (GPAC), the organization has announced.



“Since I was hired as the Arts Council’s Membership Director earlier this year,” writes GPAC’s Andre Solomon in a blog post, “our team has been

reimagining what membership can look like. We looked carefully at what worked (and what didn’t) in our old model, listened to feedback from artists and organizations, and researched membership programs across the country.”

The program will enter a testing period in February. Dues start at \$10 per month for individuals and \$180 annually for organiza-

tions. Benefits are still being refined but will include free access to GPAC resources (that normally charge a fee) and discounts at partnering entities.

For more information, [click here](#). The full membership program will launch in July 2026.

PCC Chief Wins Award

Dr. Susan Medley of the **Pittsburgh Concert Chorale** has been honored with a Pillar Award by the **Brave Women Project**.

The Pittsburgh Concert Chorale (PCC) was founded in 1985 as an all-



volunteer performing arts organization. The Brave Women Project (BWP) exists to develop opportunities for women of diverse backgrounds to move into brave action promoting equity.

BWP’s award program recognizes women who have “demonstrated a commitment to making a difference within their sphere of influence, inspiring others to take bold steps in their own lives.”

Dr. Medley was specifically cited for “pushing boundaries and expanding representation in a traditionally established field.” For more information, [click here](#).

Union Okays Pact

During a video conference on November 14, the national board of **SAG-AFTRA** ratified the tentative agreement for the 2025 Corporate/Educational & Non-Broadcast (Co/Ed) Contract.



The contract covers work on corporate and educational media projects, including training videos and industrial films. Many actors in the Pittsburgh area rely on such

work to earn their living. In addition to a 9% increase in performance rates, it touches on issues like artificial intelligence and working environments.

“The agreement shows that respect, safety and fair compensation aren’t just ideals,” says union president Sean Astin in [an official announcement](#). “They can be real, tangible improvements in our members’ day-to-day lives.”

Terms begin to take effect on December 15.

Boffo Local Box Offices

Pittsburgh’s theater world is thriving, [reports WESA-FM’s Bill O’Driscoll](#).

O’Driscoll points out to successes such as the sold-out performances of **Quantum Theatre’s** “Enron” and extended runs for the **Pittsburgh CLO’s** “Rocky Horror Show” and **City Theatre’s** “Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women.”

“It’s clear evidence that there is demand, excitement for theater in Pittsburgh,” O’Driscoll quotes City artistic director Clare Drobot.

This seems to be defying a national trend of theater companies struggling in this post-pandemic period. Meanwhile, [quiet discussions](#) are continuing between three local troupes about some form of combination or resource sharing.

Another Merger Possible

The owner of two Pittsburgh television stations, **Sinclair Broadcast Group** (SBG) is in merger talks according to [Deadline's Dade Hayes](#).

This news comes as KDKA-TV parent firm **Paramount (Skydance)** is eyeing **Warner Bros.-Discovery**.



SBC is interested in combining with the storied **E. W. Scripps Company**. The firm began in 1878 by Edward Willis Scripps

(1854-1926) with a single newspaper in Cleveland. Scripps divested its newspapers in 2014 and radio stations in 2018.

According to Hayes, SBC "had acquired 8% of Scripps Class A shares in the open market for \$15.6 million."

Scripps is apparently uninterested in a merger. "The board will take all steps appropriate to protect the company and the company's shareholders from the opportunistic actions of Sinclair or anyone else," [MediaPost's Wayne Friedman](#) quotes from an official company statement.

Arts Landing Progress

The development of the **Pittsburgh Cultural Trust's** (PCT) latest project, Arts Landing, is progressing on time and on budget.

Arts Landing is a four-acre event space in the Pittsburgh Cultural District that, among other things, will be the future home of the Three Rivers Arts Festival,



"It's amazing the progress we've been making in such a short period of time," the PCT's Kendra Whitlock Ingram told [Joanne Klimovich Harrop of the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#). "Every day I come out here, there's something new."

The project's costs are nearly 2% under budget, [reports WESA-FM's Bill O'Driscoll](#). This ribbon cutting is scheduled for April.



DJ Quits

On-air personality Jeremy "Danger" Mulder has quit radio station WOGI-FM (a.k.a. "Froggy 104.3"), [reports Eric Heyl for Patch Pittsburgh](#).

WOGI is one of four Pittsburgh stations owned by **Forever Media**. Pittsburgh is also the only major media market for the company. The others are in York (Pennsylvania) and small Maryland markets.

"I'm going to enjoy spending more time with my family," Mulder posted on social media. "Professionally, while my hair is still red I'm ready for a new path. I am excited to concentrate on growing my real estate business."

DJ Quits

Popular local comedian [Bill Crawford](#) is leaving **iHeart Media's** WDVE-FM to focus on his stand-up career.



"Getting to be a part of the DVE Morning Show has been the absolute best thing that ever happened in my career," Crawford posted on social media. "I can't thank everyone at iHeart and all the incredible listeners enough for the opportunity and the support over the years. Hope to see yinz arahnd tahn!!"

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Libsyn Signs Another Podcaster

Local podcasting firm **Liberated Syndication** (Libsyn) has announced an exclusive one-year advertising partnership with the popular true crime podcast “Strictly Stalking.”

Debuting in 2020 and hosted by Jaimie Beebe and Jake Deptula, the podcast is the only true crime series devoted solely to the crime of stalking. Through it, survivors, advocates and experts can share their experiences in a supportive environment. The series also pro-

vides anti-stalking resources and education on how friends, family and law enforcement can better help victims.



“Partnering with Jaimie and Jake on ‘Strictly Stalking’ represents exactly what makes podcasting such a powerful medium,” said Libsyn’s Stephen Perlstein in a

press release. “Their work gives voice to those who’ve been silenced and builds a deeply engaged audience through empathy, advocacy, and storytelling. We’re proud to help expand that reach and connect brands with a passionate community of true crime fans who never miss an episode.”

Libsyn’s ad service provides comprehensive ad buying and management tools for podcasters. For more information, [click here](#).

WGA Preps For Pact

A joint committee of both branches of the **Writers Guild of America** (WGA) has been formed in preparation for the upcoming contract negotiations with the **Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers** (AMPTP).

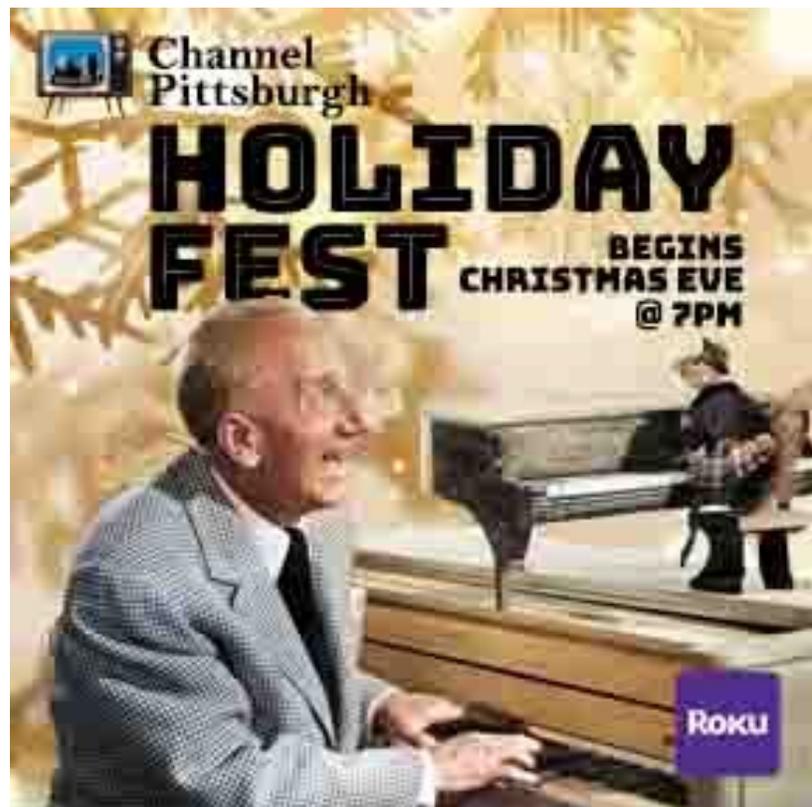


Negotiations will focus on the Minimum Basic Agreement (MBA), which expires on May 1, 2026.

The full list of committee members is available by [clicking here](#).



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International Picks Artists

More than a dozen artists have been selected for the next Carnegie International, [reports Elena Goukassian for The Art Newspaper](#).



First staged in 1896, the Carnegie International is North America's longest-running international art exhibition. It is a signature project of the **Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh**.

The next iteration --- scheduled to begin in May 2026 --- will not be staged solely at the Carnegie Museum of Art (CMA) campus but also at multiple city locations. "Our co-curators have created an International that will unfold across many disciplines

and forms," the CMA's Eric Crosby told Goukassian.

An interesting diversity of participants includes multidisciplinary American artist [Torkwase Dyson](#) and Kuwaiti-Puerto Rican artist [Alia Farid](#). More information is available by [clicking here](#).



Images



Tommie Lin Kesten, a member of the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre was recently featured on the cover of Pointe magazine.

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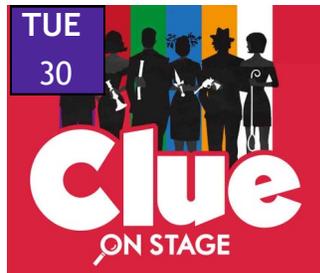
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Opportunities

A marketing professional with social media skills is being sought by the **Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra** for a part-time position. [Click here.](#)

Local game development firm **Schell Games** is seeking an engineering manager. [Click here.](#)

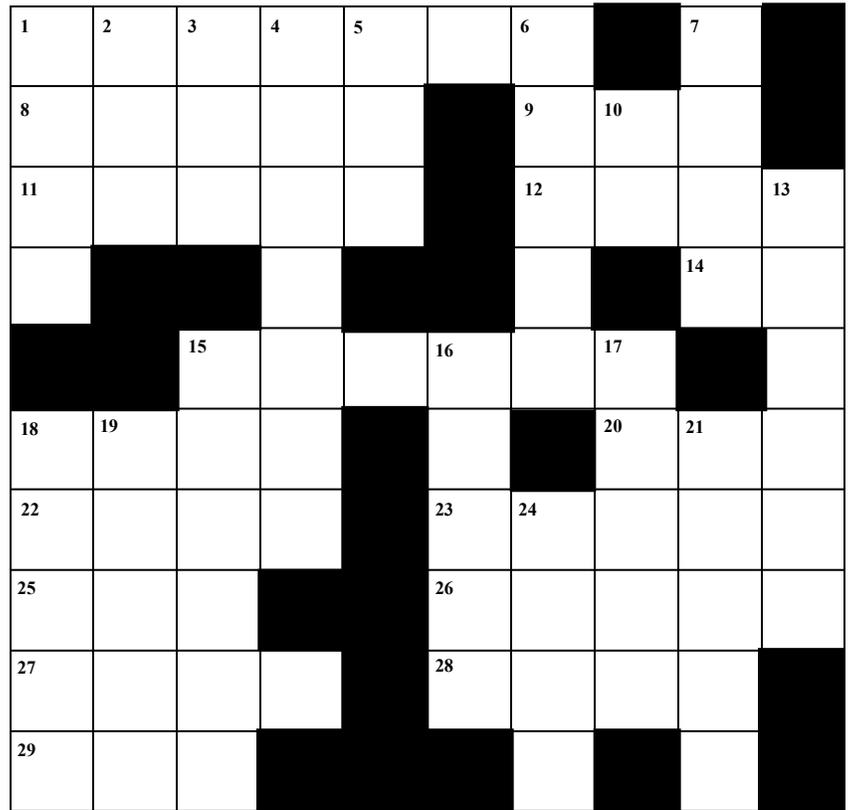
The recently relocated **International Sculpture Center** is welcoming submissions for two upcoming exhibitions. One is about the importance of ceramics in contemporary art. The other explores health and healing through sculpture. [Click here.](#)

A new executive director is needed by the **Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh**. [Click here.](#)



Across

- 1. Space Age TV family
- 8. Modify
- 9. Lower digit
- 11. American-Canadian joint command, initially
- 12. Rest stops
- 14. Approve
- 15. The patriarch of 1– Across
- 18. Popular iridescent jewelry rock
- 20. Sass
- 22. The pop music teen of 1-Across
- 23. Kind of
- 25. Protein-coding gene
- 26. Apple pathway?
- 27. Pickle herb
- 28. One-named Irish singer/songwriter
- 29. Jimmy and Roselyn’s daughter



Down

- 1. Matriarch of 1-Across
- 2. Japanese era that ended in 1868.
- 3. Street substance
- 4. The boss of 15-Across
- 5. Former brand of American designer John Varvatos
- 6. Well-known law enforcement operation
- 7. The “Biggest Little City”
- 10. The opposite of off
- 13. Apartment building home of 1-Across
- 15. Person who upsets the status quo
- 16. The maid serving 1-Across
- 17. The irrepressible boy of 1-Across
- 18. WV politician and retired army man Richard Neece
- 19. Jewish holiday commemorating an event recounted by Esther
- 21. Composer Shur, to pals
- 24. Israeli entertainer Banai, to pals

Last Month’s Solution

J	A	Y		T	R	I	M	S	
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