



# Florida Theatre's Famous Ghost Seat Returns as the Theatre Prepares to Reopen with New Seating

**Jacksonville, Fla. (November 30, 2020)** – The Florida Theatre is pleased to announce that the theatre's famous "Ghost Seat" has returned safely home after being refurbished as part of the theatre's current seating renovation.

The Florida Theatre "Ghost Seat" was discovered in 2010 when the CW17 show *Local Haunts* conducted a paranormal investigation of the theatre, and captured images of a ghostly apparition of a man sitting in the balcony, in Section 500, Row E, Seat 2. Steve Christian, who led the team, called it, "The Holy Grail of paranormal investigation."

This attracted the interest of the SyFy Channel show *Fact or Faked*, who conducted their own paranormal investigation. Using Infrared cameras, thermal imaging, and EVP recorders, they heard noises and discovered heat signatures in two places in the orchestra section, and in the very balcony seat where Steve Christian's apparition appeared. Their conclusion? They found "zero proof" that the *Local Haunts* video was faked.

Psychics routinely report a presence in the balcony. Jill Cook-Richards, a psychic consultant to a 1997 WJCT Public Television production claimed that a male ghost spoke to her, and said he wanted to be called "J" for Joy, which is what he felt for the theatre. "He said he didn't need a name from his past, that he wanted a name for his future," said Cook-Richards. She also reported that J, or perhaps Jay, was there to protect Joe Collier, then the building's maintenance manager. This has led some to speculate that Jay was a former building manager himself.

This fall, as the Theatre moved forward with plans to install brand new, historically-accurate seating, it was decided that the "Ghost Seat" and its companion seat (Section 500, Row E, Seat 1) would be the only seats in the Theatre to be restored, refurbished and reinstalled. "We did not want our ghost to be homeless if his or her seat went away permanently. They are the only two seats being restored. Every other seat is being replaced," said Florida Theatre President Numa Saisselin.

The "Ghost Seat" and its companion seat were refurbished in Grand Rapids, Michigan by Irwin Seating Company, a world leader in the design and manufacture of theatre seating. These special seats returned to the Theatre this week and will be reinstalled just in time for the Theatre's long-awaited reopening this December.

The Florida Theatre's first event in December is [Big Bad Voodoo Daddy's Wild and Swingin' Holiday Party](#) on Wednesday, December 9 at 8:00 p.m. Tickets can be purchased by visiting [floridatheatre.com](http://floridatheatre.com) or by calling the box office at 904-355-ARTS (2787).

All of the December events at the Florida Theatre will be limited-capacity, with public health measures in place. Patrons can visit [floridatheatre.com/home/breaking-news](http://floridatheatre.com/home/breaking-news) for the most up to date information on The Florida Theatre's safety protocols and general updates.

**The historic, nonprofit Florida Theatre is sponsored by Community First Credit Union. For a complete list of upcoming events or to buy tickets visit the Theatre's official website [floridatheatre.com](http://floridatheatre.com).**

## About the Florida Theatre

From ballet and opera to contemporary pop, jazz, rock, country and blues the nonprofit Florida Theatre offers 200 cultural and entertainment events annually for every taste and age. More than just an entertainment center, Florida Theatre is also home to graduations, awards ceremonies, lectures, business meetings and charity events that support the community's schools, churches, hospitals and civic groups. As an anchor to downtown development along the beautiful St. Johns River, Florida Theatre draws 250,000 people to Jacksonville's center each year. The magnificently restored Florida Theatre is recognized as one of the finest concert venues in the Southeast. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Florida Theatre holds special memories for four generations. From the Vaudeville acts and silent films of its earliest days to today's blend of performances of all kinds, the Florida Theatre has served as Jacksonville's premier entertainment center since 1927.

For media inquiries, please contact Jake Brown, Director of Marketing at [Jake@floridatheatre.com](mailto:Jake@floridatheatre.com).

###