

The Chattanooga Guides Series

# Performance Arts

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**Seasonality:** Year-round; some outdoor shows spring–summer

**#live-performances**

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**Neighborhoods:** Downtown, Highland Park, North Shore, Signal Mountain

**Best for:** Date night, Families, Theatre lovers

As a mid-sized southern city, Chattanooga's live performance scene punches above its weight class, find yourself dazzled by productions taking place in modern or historic venues.

Bring a lawn chair and your evening snack medley for an outdoor show in the summertime. We're not required by law to recommend an umbrella but we'll recommend one anyway, Chattanooga can stun even the most confident cloud readers with a 1/4 inch of rainfall without much forewarning.

You claim an unquenchable thirst for novelty? For today color yourself lucky, Chattanooga's got broadway style shows, stand-up comedy, an orchestra, and indie bands.

Starting January 31, 2026 The Chattanooga Symphony & Opera presents [Star Wars: A New Hope In Concert](#). You read that right

we've also got film scores performed live. Pardon the repetition, but there really is something here for everyone.

This guide walks you through the city's notable and overlooked venues, types of acts you'll find, and tips for making a night out of it. If you're planning a weekend trip or just looking for something new in a familiar city, Chattanooga has a seat with your name on it.

# By Topic.

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## Theatre.

### Tivoli Foundation.

Composed of three separate venues, this important Chattanooga foundation is the city staple for live performances of various types. The restoration and preservation of these historic buildings has been and remains a priority for the city of Chattanooga, an investment valued by our residents and visitors alike. Coincidentally, at the time of last update Tivoli Theatre on Broad Street is closed for major

renovations. Events are currently being held at the Memorial Auditorium or Walker Theatre.

These venues are known for their ability to charm and captivate audiences with their architecturally styles. Each has its own character and history that immediately adds to the performance experience.

To provide a better idea of what you might find on their event schedules here is a non exhaustive idea of types performances you can attend at one of the foundations theatres.

- Broadway shows.
- Comedy by both established and up and coming comedians.
- Intimate and unique music performances.
- Film Series.

**Tivoli Theatre.** Opening in 1921 the Tivoli Theatre has been serving Chattanooga for more than 90 years. This historic Beaux-Arts style performance venue on Broad Street. You can catch a variety of performances at the 'Jewel of the South'. **Currently closed for renovations.**

You'll notice the building is stylistically similar to the Chicago Theatre, which was also built in 1921. Not a coincidence, Chattanooga hired the same architecture firm for Tivoli, Rapp & Rapp, a famous firm at the time known for the Beaux-Arts style. Reuben H. Hunt, a famous Chattanooga architect was also a partner on this project.

**Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Auditorium.** Often abbreviated to 'Memorial' this venue was dedicated to Hamilton County's armed forces in 1922 and serves as living dedication to our past, current and future service members. Host to up to 3,866 attendees Memorial is a great place for concerts, comedy and community events.

**Walker Theatre.** Located in the same building as Memorial Auditorium, the Walker Theatre is the more intimate performance venue hosting 851 people maximum per show. It's excellent acoustics and seating arrangement make for an ideal performance venue preferred for its charm and personality.

The styles of beaux-arts elements of buildings bring an immediate positive energy to the audience and cast alike aiding the performance and leaving attendees asking themselves 'why aren't more buildings like this in our time'.

To find the latest event offerings and reserve your spot visit the [Tivoli Chattanooga](#) Website. You can filter by venue or browse the full calendar.

## Scenic City Shakespeare.

As far as reasons to get outside go, Shakespeare in the Park is a great one. Unique engaging performances in an open auditorium on a cool (unlikely) evening.

Come out to watch a group of passionate artists perform Shakespeare in the park at Greenway Farms. These performances are seasonal, the most recent running from May-June 2025. Past playbills indicate the productions often take place in the fall and spring of each year on Friday and Saturday evenings. Check to see when their next production will be on [their website](#).

These performances are perfect for people who appreciate the heart, passion, and hard-work that goes into crafting a live production, enjoy smaller crowds for a less busy viewing experience, or you like different reasons to get outside for an evening.

It is recommended audience members bring lawn chairs, blankets,

and refreshments to make the most of the evening.

Past Shakespeare productions included:

- Much Ado about Nothing
- A Midsummer Night's Dream
- The Comedy of Errors
- Macbeth

To give you a first hand account a past audience member commented 'Their Shakespeare in the Park performances bring classic theater to life in such a vibrant and beautiful way. I recently saw Macbeth, and it was nothing short of phenomenal, the acting was powerful, the staging was creative, and the entire production was captivating from start to finish.'

Tickets, read along scripts and more can be found [here](#).

**Time saving note:** Locating their outdoor stage has given some past attendees difficulty, so Scenic City Shakespeare provided a great [aerial visual to help](#).

## Barking Legs Theater .

A small venue with a big energy brought to you by a variety of diverse performers and their crew members.

Located just off Dodds Avenue in Highland Park the Barking Legs Theater describes themselves as an eclectic, creative, inclusive environment for a variety of different community artists and performers.

This theater company is known for their wide range of intimate performances that have included contemporary dance, experimental jazz, poetry slams, singer-songwriters, film nights, and local storytelling. They don't run short on novelty, making it easy to go back for a seconds or thirds.

If want to support local art, or you enjoy seeing unique high quality performances in a welcoming environment check out a show someday soon!

Events run year round, the calendar gets updated regularly based on performer availability. Most of the performances are on weekend evenings, and tickets are regularly under \$20. For the most updated event info, check [their website](#).

Past events have included:

- Jazz Tuesdays with local or touring musicians
- The Floor is Yours: Open mic poetry and storytelling
- Dance and movement showcases
- Independent film screenings
- Intimate concerts

## Chattanooga Theatre Centre.

100+ years strong as a mainstay of Chattanooga performing arts. The Chattanooga Theatre Centre is one of the oldest and largest community theatres in the US, running year round productions.

They're located in North Shore, next to Coolidge Park, hosting a wide range of shows right next to the Tennessee River. At any one time you might find:

- Family friendly musicals
- Classic Drama
- Youth performances

They seem to put on new productions every 6-8 weeks with shows usually Thursday - Sunday, but check their [event calendar](#) for more details and to purchase tickets.

Past productions have included:

- The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time
- Fences
- Matilda the Musical
- A Raisin in the Sun

**Helpful note:** There's free parking onsite, but it can fill up quickly on weekends. Arriving 15–20 minutes early can be a good idea.

## Honorable Mentions.

If you haven't found what you came here for, or are looking for something more niche, there are a handful of other passionate production companies performing around the area:

**Back Alley Productions (Mars Theatre):** A nonprofit production company in LaFayette, GA since 2012. They perform a full season of plays and musicals at the Historic Mars Theatre, performances typically fall–spring, but their dates shift every year. BAP has been

voted the Best Live Performance Venue in North Georgia 2018–2020.

**Signal Mountain Playhouse:** Trek up to Signal Mountain for a summer outdoor musical each July (typically Friday–Saturday evenings on weekends) and a winter indoor show around February at the Mountain Arts Community Center. Find out more on their [Facebook page](#).

**Ensemble Theatre of Chattanooga:** Ensemble runs year round new productions every ~6–8 weeks. Past seasons included short play festivals in January–February and musical concerts in summer. More information can be found [here](#).

**East Brainerd Community Theater:** Based out of Christ United Methodist Church on East Brainerd Road, EBCT usually stages one play and musical per year. The summer musical tends to be a big production with a large cast. Past shows have been *The Music Man*, *Pirates of Penzance*, and *Guys and Dolls*. More details found at [ebctchatt.com](http://ebctchatt.com).

# Comedy.

We're curating a list of the best stand-up, improv, and open-mic comedy spots in Chattanooga. Check back soon for venues, recurring shows, and tips on getting tickets and great seats.

## The Comedy Catch.

The Comedy Catch runs shows every night. Start times vary on night and show type. Check their [website](#) for the latest details. They're

located on Station Street in the Southside entertainment district.

They have the big names you've seen come to town regularly. In recent years they've hosted the likes of:

- Kevin Nealon
- AJ Wilkerson
- Jessica Michelle Singleton
- Steve Byrne

If you enjoy supporting brand new acts, they have the longest running comedy open mic in Chattanooga every Wednesday. Also note that they charge a \$5 minimum food/drink purchase per person.

Important note for the parents reading, some of their events are kid friendly, the events list on their website should have an indicator.

If you like a bigger comedy style event they are one of the yearly host's of Lookout Comedy Festival in the fall. It's a multi-day event with shows at a few unique Chattanooga venues. Check out their website [Lookout Comedy Festival](#) for more information.

## **Improv Chattanooga .**

Chattanooga has it's own local improv group. You can see them in a variety venues around the city and surrounding area. They may be performing after hours at the library, or the Barking Legs Theatre, or a coffee shop in Cleveland. Ticket prices vary. You can find details on future performances on [their website](#).

In addition to live performances they also offer free classes regularly and can be hired for events.

## Honorable Mentions .

**JJ's Bohemia:** Although primarily a well known music venue in the area, JJ's (as it's affectionately known) also hosts a variety of comedy shows throughout the year. Check out the events on their [Facebook page](#) for more details.

**Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Auditorium:** The theatre we included for live productions will sometimes host well known or up and coming regional comedians.

## Live Performance Venues in Chattanooga.

VENUE	DESCRIPTION
 Tivoli Foundation Theatres	Historic downtown venues hosting Broadway shows, concerts, comedy, and film series. Includes Tivoli Theatre (under renovation), Memorial Auditorium, and Walker Theatre.
 Scenic City Shakespeare	Seasonal outdoor Shakespeare productions at Greenway Farms—perfect for a laid-back night with lawn chairs and blankets.
 Barking Legs Theater	Eclectic performances including jazz, storytelling, dance, poetry, and indie music. Affordable shows in an intimate Highland Park venue.

 VENUE	 DESCRIPTION
 Chattanooga Theatre Centre	100-year-old community theatre offering musicals, dramas, and youth performances year-round on the North Shore.
 Back Alley Productions	North Georgia troupe performing classics and comedies fall–spring at the historic Mars Theatre in LaFayette.
 Signal Mountain Playhouse	Family-friendly outdoor musicals in July and cozy winter shows in February at the MACC on Signal Mountain.
 Ensemble Theatre of Chattanooga	Small venue known for socially conscious, contemporary plays and festivals—new shows every 6–8 weeks.
 The Comedy Catch	Chattanooga's longest-running comedy club featuring touring headliners, local showcases, and weekly open mics. Located in Southside's Station Street district.
 Improv Chattanooga	Local improv troupe performing at various venues around the city. Offers free classes and can be hired for private events.