

Arts & Entertainment



Whatever your taste in live entertainment, Sumter abounds in opportunities to delight your eyes and ears! Splendid venues, a wealth of dance and theatre talent, lively community music groups and an exploding visual arts scene make Sumter the place to explore the arts "in the middle of everything." From the beautifully restored century-old Sumter Opera House (listed in the National Register of Historic Places) to the cutting-edge modern Sumter Gallery of Art, opened in 2003, our cultural venues encompass a range of places to entertain, educate and enlighten patrons of the arts. Sumter boasts an incredibly diverse range in the visual and performing arts!

The Sumter@Six summer outdoor concert series features beach and variety music in a family-friendly atmosphere, and the Outdoor Family Film Series is another opportunity to pull up a chair and enjoy outdoor fun.

For the serious music lover, elegant Patriot Hall, the crown jewel of the historic district, hosts performances by the acclaimed Sumter Community Concert Band and the Sumter Civic Chorale. The Sumter-Shaw Community Concert Association brings the finest in big-band, orchestral and show music. Patriot Hall is also home to annual recitals by Sumter's local dance companies and others, and includes an ever more exciting lineup of events featuring contemporary dance, world music and more.

Adjoining Patriot Hall in the Sumter County Cultural Center is the Sumter Gallery of Art, with changing exhibits of locally, nationally and internationally renowned artists. Also located at the Gallery are a gift shop with unique artworks for sale, and classrooms where budding artists of all ages explore self-expression through a variety of media.

The Sumter Little Theatre is an exceptionally vibrant community theatre group dedicated to providing "quality entertainment in a friendly atmosphere." The annual season features favorites from the classics to side-splitting comedy to powerful drama.

Downtown Sumter's landmark is the historic Sumter Opera House, with its breathtaking Art Deco interior and a beautifully restored Richardson-Romanesque facade dating from 1894. The Opera House offers a superb venue for concerts and stage performances that embrace all genres of stage shows, from bluegrass jams to poetry "slams," with modern dance, comedy, opera and chamber music along the way. The Opera House is also the center of the annual Accessibility Project, a major event showcasing the work of installation artists from across the state and around the world.

Blending the best of old and new is the Sumter County Museum, an early 20th-century mansion that is home to permanent and revolving exhibits and the Carolina Backcountry, a re-created 18th-century homestead that harkens back to the earliest days of Sumter County. The Heritage Education Center and Historical and Genealogical Research Center round out the museum's many facilities. The annual Scottish Country Fair celebrates the area's Scots-Irish roots.

Another exciting area attraction is the Poinsett Bombing Range, the only USAF range that is open to the public.

Many of our cultural venues offer fantastic volunteer opportunities for talented newcomers. From regional favorites with a local flavor to avant-garde "happenings" that draw visitors from across the nation, if it's happening in the arts, it's happening in Sumter!