Redfield and Benna foundations pledge support of ‘Act One’ School of the Arts renovation

A $4 million modernization project at the School of the Arts Church Fine Arts Building has received major support from the Nell J. Redfield Foundation and the Edna B. and Bruno Benna Foundation.

The cornerstone of the Act One project is the renovation of the 54-year-old Nell J. Redfield Proscenium Theatre, including upgrades to lighting, sound and electrical rigging systems, modernization of the stage and seating venue, introduction of raked seating and hydraulic stage lifts, creation of an interior control booth and a 6,000 square-foot expansion of the scene shop.

Act One will also include remodeling the Front Door Gallery and the creation of an atrium entrance on Virginia Street. The atrium will be named in recognition of the family of the late Bruno Benna ’53 (physical education) and his wife, Edna. The estimated completion date for the entire project is late 2013.

“For nearly 40 years, University of Nevada, Reno theatre students have begun their professional careers in theatre, film, television and a host of other industries within our walls,” said Scott Casper, interim dean of the College of Liberal Arts. “The Act One project will create a modern venue with updated technology, along with a stunning lobby gallery and entrance, making Church Fine Arts a jewel on our campus and a performing arts destination throughout the region.”

In dedication to the project, President Johnson committed $900,000 in University funds for the purchase of an automated rigging system and lighting and sound systems, which were installed last summer and used in the recent Nevada Repertory Co. production of Christopher Marlowe’s The Tragical History of the Life & Death of Doctor Faustus. With lead gifts from the Nell J. Redfield and the Edna B. and Bruno Benna foundations, the University is still seeking funding for approximately $750,000 of the remaining project cost.

“The Redfield Foundation has a deep and longstanding interest in fine arts in general and the Nell J. Redfield Proscenium Theatre in particular,” said Jerry Smith, Redfield Foundation trustee. “This gift will make it possible to make necessary renovations to the theatre and to take a lead in developing the new center for fine arts.”

—Roseann Keegan

Lead gifts from the Nell J. Redfield Foundation and the Edna B. and Bruno Benna Foundation support the University of Nevada, Reno School of the Arts’ Act One renovation project, which proposes to create a new atrium entrance to the Church Fine Arts Building on Virginia Street.