

# Magic Under the Stars.



Photo by Jim Craven | jimcravenphoto.com

JACKSONVILLE, OR - A music festival that began in the summer of 1963 on a simple plywood stage erected on a hillside in Jacksonville has become one of the most famous entertainment offerings in the Pacific Northwest.

Britt Music & Arts Festival continues to bring in world-class acts for four months during the summer, putting on about 40 shows that feature everything from classical music, to rock, pop, jazz and more. With an audience capacity of 2,200, today Britt continues to expand its offerings into a more diverse entertainment lineup while expanding its educational outreach.

Britt also offers educational programs with the goal of connecting the community with as many diverse music education and listening experiences as possible. In one of these programs, Britt has recently invested more time and resources into sending professional musicians into schools, to give school-age children valuable opportunities to learn from career musicians.

Internships are also available for students who want to work alongside Britt professionals. Students sign up from Southern Oregon University, Rogue Community College and around the U.S.

During the Britt Orchestra season, musicians in the orchestra come from all over the country to spend three weeks at Britt. They are hosted in local homes, which helps offset the high cost of lodging and also gives locals a chance to connect with these musicians, and musicians a chance to create a second home.

Donna Briggs, President & CEO  
Britt Music & Arts Festival  
[www.BrittFest.org](http://www.BrittFest.org)  
350 S 1st St.  
Jacksonville, OR 97530  
(800) 882-7488

*"The fact that  
it sits on this  
amazing hillside  
surrounded by  
ponderosa pines with  
the beautiful village of  
Jacksonville behind it and  
the stars above – it's magic."*

- Donna Briggs  
President & CEO  
Britt Music & Arts Festival

## Magic Under the Stars.

Standing on a hilltop in Jacksonville in 1963, Portland conductor John Trudeau and his friend Sam McKinney gazed in wonder across the valley toward Medford.

They were on the estate of Jacksonville pioneer Peter Britt, whose legacy is synonymous with this historical community. Trudeau and McKinney were enchanted by the natural acoustics of the setting as well as the breathtaking splendor they saw all around them.

Inspired, Trudeau and McKinney knew they had found a home for their summer classical music festival.

They set to work and erected a simple plywood stage and tin-can lights. On Aug. 11, 1963, with the help of an orchestra made up of local and regional players, a Northwest music tradition was born. By 1978, the pavilion was constructed and Britt Music & Arts Festival was drawing crowds and attracting tourists to the Rogue Valley. Bench seats were added in 1987, and accessible restrooms were built in 1993, along with an accessible entrance.

With an audience capacity of 2,200, Britt is able to attract world-class acts today, and continues to expand its offerings into a more diverse entertainment lineup, all while maintaining the intimate yet awe-inspiring setting that Trudeau and McKinney first beheld more than 50 years ago.

"The fact that it sits on this amazing hillside surrounded by ponderosa pines with the beautiful village of Jacksonville behind it and the stars above – it's magic," said Donna Briggs, president and CEO of Britt. That natural setting is what makes Britt so popular for both audiences and artists alike, or as Briggs likes to say, "Location, location, location."

In years past, the Britt has experimented with adding other venues into the mix. Briggs says that what came back from the patrons was that they wanted to be on the Britt hill instead. After learning that simple lesson, Britt is more committed than ever to making that hilltop in Jacksonville even more viable and alive with the sound of music.

"Britt is about the venue," Briggs said.

That doesn't mean Britt plans to stop evolving. Staff is working on plans to improve and expand reserved seating in the near future. Britt is also looking at more food options for patrons who want to sample the foodie scene in the Rogue Valley. And, of course, Britt will continue its tradition of attracting world-class acts.

"The goal of the season is to offer a diverse array of artists that are financially viable," Briggs said. "That doesn't always mean we're going to make good money on the act." The Steve Miller Band does make money for Britt, for instance, while a jazz band may not. "It's a balancing act," Briggs said.

But Britt is more than a four-month music and entertainment festival that offers about 40 classical, rock, pop and jazz concerts, and more. Britt also offers educational programs with the goal of connecting the community with as many diverse music education and listening experiences as possible.

In one of these programs, Britt has recently invested more time and resources into sending professional musicians into schools, to give school-age children valuable opportunities to learn from career musicians.

Internships are also available for students who want to work alongside Britt professionals. Students apply from Southern Oregon University, Rogue Community College, and around the region and the U.S.

During the Britt Orchestra season, musicians in the orchestra come from all over the country to spend three weeks at Britt. They are hosted in local homes, which helps offset the high cost of lodging and also gives locals a chance to connect with these musicians, and musicians a chance to create a second home.

Since Britt's outdoor concert season is seasonal in nature, its contingent of 13 full-time staff members grows to 65 when it's show time. In addition, 80-90 volunteers work the grounds for each show. Britt has about 350 volunteers who rotate among shows, and is run by a volunteer Board of Directors. All play an important part in bringing the wave of music to that Jacksonville hillside.

"Jacksonville is a beautiful place to be in the summer," Briggs said.



Photo by Jim Craven | jimcravenphoto.com

Get lost in the splendor.

Britt Music & Arts Festival | 350 S 1st St., Jacksonville, OR 97530 | [www.brittfest.org](http://www.brittfest.org) | (800) 882-7488

[www.SouthernOregonEdge.com](http://www.SouthernOregonEdge.com) by Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development Inc. (541) 773-8946

