

Conceptual Plan Unveiled for Cultural Heritage Center

At the end of September, a conceptual plan was unveiled for the new Birthplace of Country Music Cultural Heritage Center in downtown Bristol.

The new facility will include temporary and permanent exhibits that trace the history, cultural influences, and development of

country music. A sequence of audio-visual experiences will allow visitors to listen to the melodies and encounter the rich musical tradition first-hand.

The facility will also include space for educational initiatives through programming for all ages, live musical performances,

lectures, films, and other outreach activities.

Officials estimate the total cost of the project at \$9,504,000. This includes \$1,463,000 for design, \$4,100,000 for construction and \$3,941,000 for exhibits. The project could be completed by late 2007 or early 2008, depending on funding and other considerations.

The renovated structure will provide the Birthplace of Country Music Alliance (BCMA) a permanent facility to house its operations in furtherance of the organization's mission: "To tell the story of the musical and cultural heritage of the region, its role in the birth and development of country music, and its influence on music around the world."

According to a recent economic impact study produced by the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center, over a five-year period, the Cultural Heritage Center will, at a minimum, have an economic impact of over \$43,232,806 to the region and generate \$1,041,253 in direct tax revenue that will flow into local and state coffers.

Wayne Estes, Bristol Motor Speedway vice president and chair of the Bristol Convention and Visitors Bureau, said, "While the museum should fill everyone in this community with pride, it more importantly will support local businesses by attracting more shoppers, diners, and hotels guests to our region that is rich with attractions. Motorsports events draw large numbers of people here on a few weeks each year. Our music attractions — like our outdoors activities, youth sports, and antique shopping — draw steady numbers of visitors and their tourist dollars throughout the year."

For more information, call 276-645-0035 or visit www.birthplaceofcountrymusic.org.



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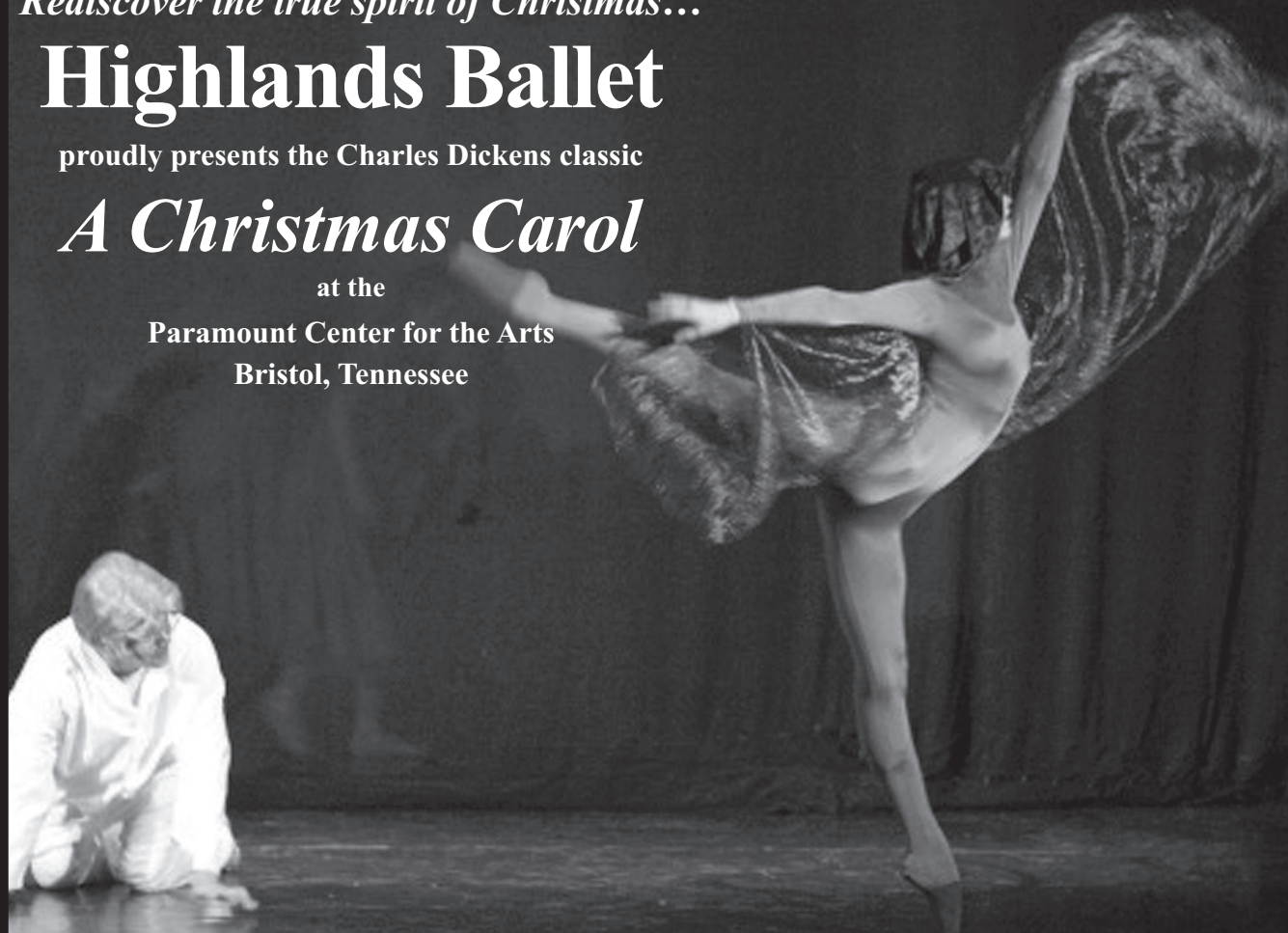
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