

FOCUS 20/20: Your Theatre, Your Town 33rd Annual Conference and Theatre Tour Cleveland, Ohio July 15-18, 2009



Last updated 6/02/09; Subject to change.

Eye Opener Breakfast Session

Saturday, July 18, 2009

8:00 – 9:15 AM

Wyndham Hotel Palace Ballroom East, 2nd level

Peer Discussions

Seek advice from your LHAT colleagues and share experiences through concurrent round-table discussions on a variety of topics related to historic theatre operations, programming, management and facilities rehabilitation. Actively engage the League's national network of experienced theatre resources and practitioners for improving your theatre, your business and your community.

- **Community Engagement**

What is your community's number one concern? How are you helping to attack it? What is the most surprising organization you work with? *Facilitator: Philip Morris, Proctors, Schenectady, NY*

- **E-marketing in Historic Theatres**

What tools and tactics have you found most effective in building your e-list, fan base or followers and attracting patrons? How do you balance the professional image of your theater with the casual atmosphere of social networking media? How do you maintain the consistency of tone/message if you utilize multiple people to handle your on-line marketing and social networking sites? *Facilitator: Randy Bobst-McKay, Empress Theatre, Vallejo, CA*

- **Executive Directors from Theatres with 1,200+ Seats**

How has the economic downturn affected your business and donation base? What steps have you taken to raise revenue, cut expenses, or otherwise get through this deep recession?

Facilitator: Peter Frisch, The Granada, Santa Barbara, CA

- **Facility Growth and Creative Space Development**

Just how do you serve dinner for two hundred in a lobby the size of a postage stamp? What can we do to make our historic spaces multifunctional? What structural modifications will facilitate better space utilization? What should we consider before taking the big leap and acquiring or building additional space? *Facilitator: Joe Jefcoat, Strand-Capitol Performing Arts Center, York, PA*

- **Greening Historic Theatres**

Motivations matter: what are yours? Historic designations and permits: do you have support? God is in the details: got data? *Facilitator: Erin Wilson, Wealthy Theatre, Grand Rapids, MI*

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- ***Leveraging the Historic Theatre – Value Added Programming***
How does the historic nature of your theatre add value to your programming? How do you capitalize on the historic nature of your building? How do you work with your community to capitalize on your theatre's history? *Facilitator: Christine Delaney, Tibbits Opera House, Coldwater, MI*
- ***Merchandizing Policies for Historic Theatres***
What should you expect from show-time sales? Food and junk -- who decides, who sells, who profits? Gift shops, museums, and cafes -- how might you extend your business hours? Is all this stuff worth the hassle? *Facilitator: Lance Olson, Cutler Majestic Theatre at Emerson College, Boston, MA*
- ***Revenue Development in Hard Times***
What kinds of membership programs are working best? Why are local businesses interested in supporting old theaters? Black-tie gala vs. grassroots casual: where's the money? What kinds of events have been successful at attracting new audiences? *Facilitator: Lee Berry, Michigan Theater, Ann Arbor, MI*

SPEAKER BIOS *(in alphabetical order)*

LEE BERRY

Chief Operating Officer
Michigan Theater, Ann Arbor, MI

Lee Berry has been active in the music industry in southeastern Michigan for over thirty years. He was a co-founder of Eclipse Jazz in the mid-70s, and presented such luminaries as Dizzy Gillespie, Charles Mingus and Ella Fitzgerald. He helped to launch Prism Productions in 1980, leading it from start-up into one of Michigan's top music promotion firms, before selling to the market leader in 2000. There he presented shows by dozens of major artists (David Bowie, Bob Dylan, Bonnie Raitt, etc.) but he specialized in discovering new artists and developing them into major headliners, including REM, The Cure, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Nine Inch Nails and Phish.

He sold Prism in 2000 and joined Olympia Entertainment in Detroit as Senior Director of Marketing, overseeing advertising, public relations, and new media activities for all non-sports events at the Fox Theater, Joe Louis Arena, Cobo Arena and Comerica Park.

He came to the Michigan Theater in 2004 as Marketing Director, adding Director of Development duties in 2005. In 2008 he became Chief Operating Officer. He holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan and an MBA from the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan.

RANDY BOBST-MCKAY

General Manager and Acting Executive Director
Empress Theatre, Vallejo CA

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With a background in show management from rock music to theater and ballet to symphony, Mr. Bobst-McKay's credits include San Francisco Opera, Tony Award-winning companies American Conservatory Theater and Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Emmy Award-nominated Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley, four Broadway shows including the Tony Award-winning *Dame Edna: The Royal Tour*, and numerous rock concert tours for acts large and small. The Empress Theatre is his second historic theater renovation after the successful reopening of San Jose's California Theatre. He holds a BA degree in Technical Theatre and Management from San Francisco State University and Broadcast Media with a minor in Business and Marketing from Walla Walla University. Besides LHAT, he is a member of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters, International Special Events Society, and the Association for Convention Operations Managers.

CHRISTINE DELANEY

Executive Director

Tibbits Opera House, Coldwater, MI

Christine Delaney is the executive director for the Tibbits Opera House built in 1882. The 500-seat theatre operates year-round with 200-plus days of usage each year. Tibbits produces summer stock theatre, presents a touring artist series, offers children's and school programming including theatre with children, and is a community rental facility. Located in Coldwater, Michigan a town of 10,000 in a county of 44,000 it reins as the center for arts and culture for the community, a regional tourism attraction and an important economic driver for the downtown.

PETER FRISCH

Executive Director

The Granada, Santa Barbara, CA

Peter is currently the Executive Director overseeing the \$60 million renovation and future programming of the Granada Theatre, a 1,550-seat Spanish/Moroccan /Art Deco jewel built in 1924. The Granada is scheduled to reopen in March 2008. Peter earned his M.F.A. in directing from Carnegie-Mellon University, recognized as one of the top drama programs in the country, and returned to head the School of Drama from 1995-2001. At Carnegie he led the group that designed and built the \$43 million Purnell Center for the Arts. He has been Artistic Director for American Playwrights Theatre in D.C. and Resident Director with The Berkshire Theatre Festival and the Pittsburgh Symphony. In L.A. Peter produced network television for Fox and CBS. He has held faculty posts at the Juilliard School, Harvard University, Boston University, Carnegie-Mellon and Cal Arts. He has taught and mentored professional actors and directors on both coasts during his career.

JOE JEFcoat

President/CEO

Strand-Capitol Performing Arts Center, York, PA

Joe has served as Senior Vice President for Administration and Programs at the North Carolina Blumenthal Performing Arts Center, Director of the Center for the Performing Arts at Penn State

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University, Vice President for Arts and Education at Spirit Square Center for the Arts, Managing Director of Ping Chong and Company, Managing Director of the Hangar Theatre and Executive Director of New York's HB Studio. He has served as president of statewide professional organizations in North Carolina and Pennsylvania, served on the Executive Board of the International Society for the Performing Arts, the Central Pennsylvania Commission on the Arts and the Florida State University Theatre Network

Joe has chaired numerous committees for local, regional and national organizations, and acted as an evaluator and grant panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts and several state arts councils and private foundations. He joined LHAT board members Tom Johnson and Barbara Smith in presenting a workshop on historic theatres during the Performing Arts Exchange in Baltimore last fall. Joe currently chairs LHAT's membership committee.

LANCE OLSON

Theatre Manager

Cutler Majestic Theatre at Emerson College, Boston, MA

Lance Olson joined the Emerson College staff in November, 1993. During his tenure at Emerson College he has promoted partnerships with Boston's finest not-for-profit resident arts groups which have served to stabilize and strengthen the Majestic, and make it the most active, serving the most diverse communities, among Boston's Historic Theatre District facilities. He has raised funds for and supervised nearly \$500k in restoration and improvement projects that have created a 21st century theater inside a landmark 19th century shell.

Olson serves as President of Massachusetts Advocates for the Arts, Sciences and Humanities (MAASH) as a member of the Legislative Advocacy Committee of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters as a trustee of Dance Makers, Inc. as a member of the steering committee of the Boston Historic Theatres Charrette as a member of the board of New York's Improvisational Arts Ensembles, Inc. on the Education Advisory Council for the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark and as a member of the League of Historic American Theatres, The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Boston Preservation Alliance. He is a graduate of the University of Minnesota, and of Brooklyn College, holding an M.F.A degree in Performing Arts Administration.

Olson has worked in the professional performing arts since 1969. Most recently he served as the presenter at Rutgers University, where he was one of the founders and the Executive Director of Rutgers SummerFest. While at Rutgers, he expanded outside presentations and residencies from five classical music concerts in 1986 into a 110-event multi-disciplinary community service program. Olson conceived and executed Rutgers' Nikolais/Louis Residency and Retrospective Program, during which the University commissioned the reconstruction of twelve works from the first 25 years of the multi-media geniuses Alwin Nikolais and Murray Louis. The project received the largest grant ever awarded by the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Arts Partners Program administered by the Association of Performing Arts Presenters.

ERIN WILSON

Theater Director

Grand Rapids Community Media Center, Wealthy Theatre, Grand Rapids, WI

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Erin moved to Grand Rapids after living in New York City and Williamsburg, Brooklyn, where he bartended in the East Village at night, and taught English to immigrants during the day. In Grand Rapids, working for Community Media Center, Erin managed a community access television station - until 2006, when his executive director surprisingly tapped him to run the theatre. An unorthodox move, as Erin's experience with theatre was limited to renting a venue in Chicago to premiere a play. Erin lives in the urban core neighborhood of Baxter, in the city of Grand Rapids, five blocks from Wealthy Theatre. His partner, Amy, is a ballet/modern dance instructor.