

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



*Last updated 6/19/09; subject to change.*

## TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

*Panel discussions, hands-on workshops, case study presentations and presentations of research from the field will be offered on a variety of topics related to best practices and emerging trends during a segment each day of the conference. All sessions will be repeated following a short refreshment break, so you can attend twice as many sessions this year.*

*This page contains session topics, descriptions, speakers and room assignments as they become available. Speaker bios (in alphabetical order) follow the list of topics and descriptions.*

### Session I

Wednesday, July 15, 2009

2:00 – 3:15 PM and 3:30-4:45 PM

Wyndham Hotel Meeting Rooms, 3<sup>rd</sup> Level

#### ***10 Steps in Historic Theatre Project Planning***

Does your project have what it takes? Is it feasible? Do you have the necessary human and financial resources? From assessing the potential of a historic theatre to developing a project management plan and implementing a successful rehabilitation plan, community leaders and others contemplating a theatre project will learn about the process and a framework for planning successful projects.

**Presenter:** *Janis Barlow, Janis A. Barlow & Associates, Toronto, ON*

#### ***Strategies for Successful Group Sales***

How can you improve your theatre's financial success through group sales? From prioritizing your sales strategies when building your season through successfully marketing shows to groups, you'll take a realistic look at setting and achieving sales goals.

**Presenter:** *Jamie Vosmeier, Group Sales Director, Fox Theatre, Atlanta, GA*

#### ***Film Presenting in Historic Theatres: What Works in Your Community?***

From art houses to community-based, mission-driven specialty film and performing arts centers, historic theatres in communities large and small reflect a variety of approaches to film exhibition. A panel of seasoned historic theatre managers discusses their programming strategies for engaging their communities in an appreciation of classic and contemporary film.

**Presenters:** *Russ Collins, Michigan Theater, Ann Arbor, MI; and Stephanie Silverman, Belcourt Theatre, Nashville, TN*

#### ***56,000 Reasons to Subscribe: How America's Oldest Theatre Built America's Most Vibrant Subscription Audience***

Have cultural institutions turned loyal fans into casual buyers? When did "customer relationship management" turn into giving less to our most loyal customers? Learn how the Walnut Street Theatre, using traditional marketing tools and techniques, developed a subscription base of over 56,000 people.

**Presenters:** *Mark Sylvester and Ralph Weeks, Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, PA*

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## ***Using Federal Historic Tax Credits to Help Finance Historic Theatre Rehabs – Impact on Organizational Structure, Budgets and Operations***

Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits have been a popular financing tool used by both commercial and nonprofit organizations. While they can provide an infusion of equity, they often require a paradigm shift within an organization. What changes do these investments require? How are an organization's operations affected by the creating of as many as four new entities?

**Presenters:** *Darlene Smolik, Plymouth Soundings, LLC, Loudon, TN; Douglas Banghart, Esq., Holland & Knight LLP, Boston, MA; Ron Thiele, Executive Director, Stanley Center for the Performing Arts, Utica, NY*

## ***Product Demonstration: Rigging System***

*Hanna Theatre*

Join Mike Murphy, President, J.R. Clancy, for a back-stage tour of the renovated Hanna Theatre, demonstration of the Hanna's automated rigging system and discussion of applying high tech solutions to historic theatres. J.R. Clancy has been involved in several renovations of historic theatres in recent years and would like to help League members see what can be done in their theatres.

## ***SPEAKER BIOS (in alphabetical order)***

### **DOUGLAS BANGHART, ESQ.**

Syndication Practice Group  
Holland & Knight LLP, Boston, MA

Douglas R. Banghart practices in the area of state and federal tax credit syndication, partnership taxation, and non-profit organizations. He represents major institutional investors, developers, local governments, community development entities (CDEs), and non-profit organizations, primarily in real estate redevelopment projects. He has extensive experience in closing new markets tax credit leverage fund transactions, including as lead attorney on the largest new markets transaction ever closed, and twinned historic and new markets tax credit transactions. He speaks frequently on issues related to partnership taxation and the legal and tax implications of various incentive programs.

### **JANIS A. BARLOW**

Janis A. Barlow & Associates, Toronto, ON

Janis Barlow is a consultant in arts and heritage resource management, specializing in the development and rehabilitation of theatres and performing arts centers. Her background combines comprehensive project planning and management experience with post-secondary studies in theatre, sociology and architecture.

Since 1978, Janis Barlow has consulted on the design, restoration and/or management of over 200 theatres. Her client groups have included governments and their agencies, arts and heritage groups, private foundations, real estate developers, funders and theatre producers and proprietors throughout the United States and Canada.

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## **RUSSELL B. COLLINS**

Executive Director  
Michigan Theater, Ann Arbor, MI

Russ Collins has been the Executive Director of the Michigan Theater since 1982. The Michigan Theater is a fully-restored 1920's era movie palace that is operated as an elegant, not-for-profit arts facility presenting and hosting a wide-variety of high quality film and live-on-stage programs. Collins' professional honors include serving as a Professional Theatre Program Fellow of the University of Michigan, an Arts Administration Fellow of the National Endowment for the Arts and he was knighted by Republic of Italy, awarded the title of *Calvaliere nell'Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana* for his promotion of Italian film culture in the United States. For many years he was a board member of the League of Historic American Theatres.

Michigan's Governor appointed Collins to the board of the State's Humanities Council and locally, Collins serves on the board the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority, a board member of the State Street Area Association, past board member of the Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau and Rotary. He currently presides at the Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce monthly Morning Edition program. Collins teaches film studies at Eastern Michigan University and is the host of "Cinema Chat," a weekly radio program on National Public Radio affiliate WEMU. He is an Ann Arbor, Michigan native who received both a Bachelors and Masters Degree (in arts administration) from the University of Michigan.

## **MIKE MURPHY**

President  
J. R. Clancy, Inc., Syracuse, NY

Mike Murphy has been with J. R. Clancy for over 12 years, and became President of the company in May, 2009. He's been involved in theatrical rigging since high school, and was previously President of Secoa. Mike was deeply involved with the Hanna Theatre renovation, and looks forward to working on other renovations of historic theatres.

## **STEPHANIE SILVERMAN**

Managing Director  
The Belcourt Theatre, Nashville, TN

Stephanie Silverman joined the Belcourt Theatre in early 2007 and is responsible for managing the overall operations and future planning of the two theatre complex in the heart of Nashville, Tennessee. Primarily Nashville's home for art, independent, repertory and foreign cinema, the Belcourt is also a popular venue for concerts, theatre and special events. Prior to her tenure with the Belcourt, Silverman worked for several non-profit arts organizations including the Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago, Chicago, IL; John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI; and founded the Arts on the Green Festival in Omaha, NE. She also worked with RMS Titanic, Inc (now Premier Exhibitions) and artist management/concert promotion agency Exceptional Artists. She holds degrees from the University of Nebraska and the North Carolina School for the Arts.

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## **DARLENE SMOLIK**

President  
Plymouth Soundings, LLC, Loudon, TN

Darlene (Dee) Smolik works with clients that want to benefit from equity in State and Federal Tax Credits for historic rehabilitation projects. She provides financial coordination services throughout the financing process, project completion and subsequent operations startup. Dee worked as project coordinator and owner's representative on Tennessee Theatre in Knoxville, a \$30 million rehabilitation project that achieved almost \$7 million of additional equity. Subsequent projects include the Adler Theatre in Davenport, the Fox Theater in Spokane, Proctor's Theatre, Stanley Theatre, Clemens Center and Hudson Opera House in New York State and the Colony/Hippodrome in Ohio. A frequent presenter at LHAT's annual conference, Dee has also served as a presenter for LHAT's *Financing Historic Theatre Rehabilitation Projects* seminars. Currently, Dee serves on the League's Board and is a member of the Finance and Education Committees.

## **MARK D. SYLVESTER**

Managing Director  
Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, PA

Mark's extensive career has spanned Summer Stock to Broadway as an actor, stage manager, box office treasurer, theatre manager, marketing director and general manager. This season he is celebrating his 28<sup>th</sup> year in the theatre and 15<sup>th</sup> season at the Walnut. At the age of 21, he managed his first theatre, New York's historic Provincetown Playhouse. Mark spent several years working with commercial theatre. Since 1987, he has devoted his career to non-profit theatre companies, including six seasons at Miami's Coconut Grove Playhouse. To date, Mark has been associated with over 300 stage productions. An avid collector of musical theatre recordings, his collection contains over 2,700 cast albums from around the world. Widely regarded as a theatrical marketing expert, Mark lectures and consults with organizations internationally. He has served on the Board of the Theatre League of South Florida, Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia, East Broad Improvement Association and currently the National Alliance for Musical Theatre, where he co-chairs the membership committee. With Bernard Havard, he co-authored the book *Walnut Street Theatre*, published by Arcadia Publishing. Since he joined the Walnut in 1994, it has become the most subscribed theatre company in the world.

## **RONALD THIELE**

Executive Director – Stanley Center for the Arts, Utica, New York

Ron Thiele brings 40 plus years professional experience providing management, administration or artistic direction of non-profit arts organizations. For the last 14 years Ron has focused exclusively in administrative arts management and executive director roles within arts based non-profits. Ron provides LHAT with extremely recent first-hand knowledge of Historic and New Market tax credit and capital project issues. The Stanley Project began construction in July 2006 and was completed in March 2008. Ron has also been a principal fundraiser for this project putting together an extensive public-private partnership and making use of several economic development opportunities as well as historic preservation options.

## **JAMIE VOSMEIER**

Director of Group Sales & Subscriptions  
Fox Theatre, Atlanta, Georgia

A native of Richmond, Indiana, Jamie Vosmeier lived in Indianapolis, Indiana before settling in Marietta, GA, where he now makes his home with his three children. Jamie was previously the Group Sales Manager for Broadway Across America – Indianapolis before joining the Fox Theatre in 2006. His background is in Theatre Education.

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**RALPH WEEKS**

Director of Marketing and Public Relations  
Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, PA

Ralph started his career working with Marshall Mason and Rod Marriott at Circle Repertory Company in New York City. He was then hired to become the Director of Marketing at Playwrights Horizons with Andre Bishop as Artistic Director. He moved down to Wall Street and worked for the infamous Ivan F. Boesky before moving on to the world of subscriptions and *National Thrift News*, helping to re-brand the institution and build the company's product line. It was later purchased by Faulkner and Gray and Ralph was brought on board as a marketing analyst. He was promoted to the Director of Marketing for the Accounting and Business Strategy divisions and later added the Banking division to his product management line, which included newspapers, magazines, CDs, business conferences and more. Returning to theatre in 1998, he became Marketing Director for The Pasadena Playhouse and has been Director of Marketing at the Walnut Street Theatre since 2003.