

Press Release | ACE Theatrical Group Embraces Long History of Preserving Historic Treasures

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A theatrical management and development company formed by entertainment industry veterans, ACE Theatrical Group specializes in preserving historic treasures and expanding the arts community. It works to design, reconstruct and operate live performance venues throughout North America, with a long history of success.

“Many theatres have fallen into disrepair due to various reasons. As an experienced team, we have the opportunity to preserve a historic treasure, restore it and reactivate the arts community,” said David Anderson, President and CEO of ACE Theatrical Group.

ACE Theatrical Group is a continuation of PACE, an entertainment company launched by renowned promoter, producer and venue manager Allen Becker in the 1960’s. Both were created to re-energize the arts community and offer more diverse and professionally managed indoor performing arts centers.

“PACE paved the road for Broadway and spectacular indoor entertainment venues,” said Allen Becker, chairman of ACE Theatrical Group. “ACE Theatrical Group is carrying on this business. We are developing a better product and delivering it to communities, stimulating local economies and rejuvenating theatres that are part of our history and future at the same time.”

ACE Theatrical Group combines public and private sources of funding and works with local municipalities, businesses, community groups and non-profits. “We successfully tap into local communities via grassroots efforts and on-site management,

allowing us to know exactly the style of art, music, theatre, dance or entertainment each community would like to see in its neighborhood,” said Anderson. “Each community is a unique entity, and our team plays an active role in creating a diverse program mix to serve each one.”

Emphasis is placed on providing a mix of performance genres including musical theatre, performing arts attractions, national music and comedy artists, cultural attractions, educational outreach, and family and children’s entertainment, enabling all segments of the community to appreciate and enjoy their theatre.

The company’s principals have over 175 years combined experience and collectively have development and management credits in 35 theatrical venues in the United States and Canada, from newly constructed to historic theatres. Twenty of those also include the design and construction of those projects. Many leading entertainment professionals from PACE helped launch ACE Theatrical Group, bringing along first-hand experience and long-time partnerships. Based in Houston, Texas, the company also has offices in New York, San Antonio and New Orleans.

Currently, the company is overseeing the restoration of the Saenger Theatre in New Orleans, LA, and the former Loew’s Kings Theatre in Brooklyn, NY. “We all enjoy watching these beautiful theatres come back to life, knowing what a glorious evening so many theatre-goers will experience,” said Becker.

A spectacular example of Italian Renaissance architecture, the Saenger Theatre was built in 1927 at the corner of Canal and North Rampart streets in downtown New Orleans, LA. The building was damaged by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and has since been the focus of a complex redevelopment project, a public-private partnership between the City of New Orleans, Canal Street Development Corporation and ACE Theatrical Group. Currently, the theatre is more than halfway through an estimated \$52 million renovation effort, with plans to reopen October 2013.

“The reopening of the Saenger Theatre will be a catalyst for the continuing revitalization of this neighborhood,” said Anderson. “We expect the theatre to bring hundreds of thousands of people annually to the theatre district.”

Architects and artisans are working to recreate the Saenger Theatre’s original stature and ambiance inside and out, including spectacular crystal chandeliers, stunning architecture and detailed paintwork on the ceiling. The renovated 60 ft. atrium arcade,

the entranceway off Canal Street, will be restored to its original 1927 glory featuring the original art.

The Saenger Theatre will reopen with a seating capacity of approximately 2,600, and will double the number of available performance dates in the New Orleans theatre marketplace.

Originally constructed in 1929, the former Loew's Kings Theatre is also undergoing a multi-million dollar renovation designed to convert the spectacular, gilded movie palace into a state-of-the-art performing arts facility. The Kings Theatre is located in the once thriving, still active shopping district along Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn. The largest indoor theatre in Brooklyn, it has been vacant since 1977 and is expected to re-open in 2015. The theatre broke ground in January.

“The Kings Theatre will be home to diverse audiences, from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures,” said Anderson. “We are deeply engaged in this community and committed to reactivating a great theatre, with new opportunities for patrons of all ages and entertainment preferences.”

The revamped theatre will be home to 200 plus events annually, including 50-60 concerts and is on track to regain its status as Brooklyn's largest indoor theatre more than three decades after it was shuttered and acquired by the City of New York. The theatre will add vibrancy, quality of life, and an economic boost in the arm to New York's largest borough.

ACE Theatrical Group also has direct responsibility for the oversight and management of the The Majestic Theatre in San Antonio, TX; Charline McCombs Empire Theatre in San Antonio, TX; and Mahalia Jackson Theater for the Performing Arts in New Orleans, LA.

Located in the heart of downtown San Antonio, TX, the Majestic Theatre was built in 1929. In a successful effort to turn the historic movie theatre into a landmark, modern performing arts facility, Las Casas Foundation raised \$9 million in the 1980’s and 90’s for renovations, with substantial investments from the City of San Antonio, ACE Theatrical Group and local philanthropies. The Majestic Theatre has held more than 4,200 events and hosted more

than five million patrons since 1989.

The Charline McCombs Empire Theatre was built in 1913 on the site of the former Rische's Opera House in San Antonio, TX. Designed in the style of a European Palazzo by architects Mauran, Russell & Crow of St. Louis, MO, the Empire operated as

a vaudeville house and then a motion picture theater. After a slow decline, the vaudeville house closed its doors in 1978. Seating 865 theatre-goers, the venue reopened as the Charline McCombs Empire Theatre in 1998 after \$5 million in renovations.

The Mahalia Jackson Theater for the Performing Arts began its life as the New Orleans Theater of the Performing Arts in January 1973. After two decades of hosting world-class performances, city council voted to rename the venue The Mahalia Jackson Theater for the Performing Arts in honor of the famed and beloved New Orleans gospel singer. After Hurricane Katrina brought over 14 feet of flood waters into the venue, the theatre was awarded new life by virtue of more than \$30 million in repairs and improvements.

“To this day, we hear stories from people who went to see *Gone with the Wind* at The Majestic Theatre. Or we hear about a couple's first date, or their grandparents' first date,” said Anderson. “The most rewarding part about our job is the opportunity to rekindle memories, reconnect communities and connect generations.”

“It is a gift to watch theatre-goers experience the excitement of live theatre,” said Becker. “Everyone – from young to old – can connect with it.”

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About ACE Theatrical Group

ACE Theatrical Group, LLC is a theatrical management and development company formed by entertainment industry veterans specializing in the design, development, construction and operation of first class, live performance venues throughout North America. The company has a long history of working with municipalities, non-profit agencies and community groups to develop spectacular performance facilities with state-of-the-art improvements emphasizing patron comfort and artist's technical needs.

Visit www.acetheatricalgroup.com for more information.