

the Theatre Historical Society of America

The Organization

The Theatre Historical Society of America (THSA) is a 1,000- member international non-profit organization. THSA was founded in 1969 by theatre historian Ben M. Hall, author of the first major book on movie palaces, *The Best Remaining Seats*.

THSA is the foremost organization of its kind in the U.S. which records and preserves the popular cultural history of theatre buildings, including their design and operation.

THSA is open to individuals and organizations interested in historic theatres, from Victorian opera houses to nickelodeons, legitimate playhouses, movie palaces and today's multiplexes.

Through its publications, a quarterly journal, *Marquee*®, an Annual, and a quarterly newsletter, THSA celebrates the legacy of America's historic theatres and encourages serious appreciation and study of this aspect of our cultural history. THSA exists to serve its members and the interested public as an educational and historical organization. Your membership and participation in its activities will help strengthen THSA in achieving its goals and objectives in documenting America's rich theatrical history.

The Theatre Historical Society of America is an IRS-approved 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization, incorporated in Washington, D.C. in 1969. It is run by a paid executive director, an executive committee of officers, ten regional directors elected by the membership, and a corps of dedicated volunteers.



Conclaves

THSA conducts an annual Conclave, or convention, in a different part of the country each year. This exciting event brings together members from across North America, as well as from Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and other countries. Several days are spent touring many theatres, often from the basement to the projection booth. There's a Slide Bash, in which members show pictures of their favorite theatres, a Flea Market selling theatre-related items, and an annual membership meeting and awards banquet. Recent Conclaves have been held in Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, Montreal, Detroit, New York City and Chicago. Conclaves are always eagerly anticipated -- a chance to see unique theatres and places, as well as an opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones.

THSA Archives and Museum

THSA operates the American Theatre Architecture Archive at its headquarters in Elmhurst, Illinois. It contains material on more than 13,000 theatres primarily in the United States, consisting of photographs, negatives, slides, newspaper and magazine clippings, books, manuscripts, programs and videotapes. This wonderful research facility is open to the public. Members are highly encouraged to utilize these resources and they receive a discount on user fees and charges. Further details on fees and charges may be requested directly, and are also available on our website, www.historictheatres.org.

THSA also maintains an informal museum display and exhibits of theatre-related artifacts, architectural renderings, photographs, signs, uniforms and other items from the great movie palaces of the 1920s. These displays are open during regular business hours, and occasional evening and weekend hours. There is no admission charge, although donations are cheerfully accepted. Tours for small groups and off-site programs may also be arranged.

Resource Assistance

Historic theatres are one of the most vulnerable building types, whether located in an urban neighborhood or rural community. THSA promotes public awareness and understanding of their value as well as adaptive reuse of these irreplaceable gems that have fostered so many memories for so many individuals. We offer resource assistance to those involved in historic theatre projects, including archival material and public presentations.

THSA has offered assistance to the Disney Organization for the restoration of New York's New Amsterdam Theatre; to Livent Inc. for the renovation of Chicago's Oriental Theatre; to the Detroit Opera House; and to scores of other important renovation/restoration projects across North America. Additionally, assistance is provided on a daily basis to architects, journalists, foundations and students.

How To Reach THSA

The Theatre Historical Society headquarters and American Theatre Architecture Archives and Museum are located on the second floor of the Historic York Theatre in Elmhurst, Illinois, a western suburb of Chicago. We are easily accessible by automobile and public transit. A Metra commuter rail station is two blocks from THSA, making THSA a convenient 20-minute trip from Chicago's Richard B. Ogilvie Transportation Center.

**Address: 152 North York St., Suite 200
Elmhurst, IL 60126-2806**

Phone: (630) 782-1800

Fax: (630) 782-1802

E-mail: execdir@historictheatres.org

website: www.historictheatres.org

Above: Interior of the restored Detroit Opera House (former Capitol Theatre)
Photography : Albert Kahn Associates.