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# *Press Release*

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**For Immediate Release**

*The League of Historic American Theatres  
Presents 2008 AWARDS to Newberry Opera House and Janis A. Barlow, Theatre Consultant*

BALTIMORE, MD (July 2008) – **The League of Historic American Theatres**, celebrating leadership in the preservation, restoration and sustainable operation of historic theatres, presented its **2008 Outstanding Historic Theatre Award** to the **Newberry Opera House** in Newberry, SC and its **2008 Outstanding Individual Contribution Award** to theatre consultant **Janis A. Barlow**, Toronto, ON, during its 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference & Theatre Tour in Atlanta, GA.

League President James Boese, Vice President of the Nederlander Producing Company of America, New York, NY, Thomas Johnson, principal architect of Martinez and Johnson | Architecture, Washington, DC, and Killis Almond, FAIA, principal architect of Killis Almond and Associates in San Antonio, TX announced the awards.

Boese recognized the Newberry Opera House “for its significant accomplishments, inspiring excellence in the preservation, restoration and sustainable operations of historic theaters throughout North America.” He acknowledged the award-winning Newberry Opera House as a prime example of best practices in our industry, and cited the Opera House as the major factor in the economic blossoming of their region of South Carolina.

Johnson praised the theatre’s adventurous programming, exemplary community engagement, and the astoundingly successful renaissance of Newberry, transforming it into a tourist destination and an international economic hub.

Dr. James E. Wiseman, Chairman of the Newberry Opera House Board of Directors, accepting the award for the theater, thanked the League for their exceptional service to the field of historic theaters. He attributed the success of the Newberry Opera House to more than 300 community volunteers who contribute over 18,000 hours of work annually.

In a community of 10,000 residents, more than 250 million dollars of economic growth is attributed to rehabilitation of the Newberry Opera House. “Perhaps no other town in the Carolinas has gotten as much attention as Newberry,” wrote *Sandlapper Magazine*. “But the publicity is justified. As Newberry transformed itself from sleepy southern burg to international arts and business center, a state watched in stupefaction and then cheered it on. Now it’s the toast of South Carolina and fodder for the national press, which has covered it for its audacity to revive itself through the arts.”

The Newberry Opera House, which presents more than 200 events annually, is an 1881 French Gothic structure, renovated and reopened in 1999. It draws approximately 100,000 people a year to Newberry, which is located in the rural, central Midlands of South Carolina. Its performers range from Kris Kristofferson to Zoë Caldwell to the Temptations to the Oak Ridge Boys to the NY Gilbert and Sullivan Society.

The League's *2008 Award for Outstanding Individual Contribution*, acknowledges the significant accomplishments of **Janis A. Barlow** and her passion for the preservation and restoration of historic theatres. Comprising one of North America's most respected arts consulting firms, Barlow and her associates provide a range of research, planning and management services in the cultural and non-profit sectors.

Presenting the award to Ms. Barlow, former League president Killis Almond praised her selfless devotion to the historic theatre field, describing her as "a rare individual whose professional life has been dedicated to empowering others to realize their greatest aspirations."

Barlow's firm, specializing in the sustainable development of theatre companies and facilities, believes strongly in the shared experience and its power to transform communities. A frequent presenter at League conferences and in educational seminars, Janis Barlow also has provided *pro bono* strategic planning services to the League, engaging its members in determining the association's strategies for helping to ensure the sustainability of historic theatres for generations to come.

In accepting her award, Ms. Barlow invoked Canadian writer Gabrielle Roy (1909-1983), whose quotation, "Nous connaitrions-nous seulement un peu nous-meme, sans les arts?" ("Could we ever know each other in the slightest without the arts?"), is inscribed on the Canadian twenty-dollar bill. Barlow thanked the League and its members, "who honor our collective history of art and artists by helping preserve historic American theatres."

### *About the League of Historic American Theatres*

The **League of Historic American Theatres** ([www.lhat.org](http://www.lhat.org)), a non-profit membership association, promotes the rescue, rehabilitation and sustainable operation of historic theatre throughout North America. Founded in 1976, the League serves members through educational programs, publications, specialized services and an annual conference and theatre tour.

Members of the League include professional theatre managers throughout the U.S. and Canada, who are effective cultural conveners in communities, large and small, as well as architects, engineers, specialists in historic finishes, and a range of other consultants, service providers and suppliers. League members are dedicated to rescuing historic theatres in their communities and returning cultural vitality to their main streets. Some have successfully energized venues and communities, generating significant economic and cultural benefits for their communities. Others are dedicated to providing services, crafts, arts and artists required to professionally restore and operate historic theatres.

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