



Victoria Theater: New Home for Ensemble Theater Company

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Santa Barbara, CA.

ENSEMBLE THEATER COMPANY is pleased to announce its plans to relocate to a completely renovated and modernized **NEW VICTORIA THEATRE**, at 33 West Victoria Street, in the heart of the Santa Barbara downtown performing arts district.

ENSEMBLE THEATRE COMPANY is entering into a 30-year lease of the Victoria Theatre approved by the **VICTORIA STREET COMMUNITY HOUSE COUNCIL** (the “**BUILDING COUNCIL**”). The Victoria Theatre is roughly half of a larger building that includes offices, all owned by three non-profit organizations—Child Abuse Listening and Mediation (“**CALM**”), Retired Senior Volunteer Program (“**RSVP**”), and The Unity Shoppe (“**Unity Shoppe**”). The **BUILDING COUNCIL**, which has the sole authority over the Victoria Theatre, is composed of representatives from each of the owners plus two voting community representatives. Ensemble Theatre Company and the **BUILDING COUNCIL** have been discussing a lease for over two years.

*“Relocation to the New Victoria Theatre will enable **Ensemble Theatre Company** to become a regionally significant theatre, one which will serve the entire performing arts community of Santa Barbara,”* said Jonathan Fox, Executive Artistic Director of **ENSEMBLE THEATRE COMPANY**. *“A new theatre space will enable us to greatly expand our programming and artistic vision. We are very excited by the possibilities that lie ahead.”*

For 6 years, the owners leased the Victoria Theatre to a private individual who operated the theatre. That lease, and the income it generated for the owners, terminated in December 2008, leaving the owners without a tenant. The new lease will benefit all the owners of the building, who will obtain major capital improvements to their facility at no cost, while again receiving the steady income they have lost since termination of the prior lease in 2008. The lease guarantees that the Unity Shoppe will have the theatre itself free of charge every December for its annual Christmas Telethon. **ENSEMBLE THEATRE COMPANY** envisions ample opportunity for other organizations to utilize the new theatre throughout the year.

*“The **Building Council** and the Board of **Ensemble Theatre Company** believe this lease is a win-win-win solution—good for all the owners of the building, perfect for Ensemble Theatre Company, a huge contribution to the performing arts, and wonderful for the City of Santa Barbara,”* announced Richard Schuette, President of the Board of **CALM**.

As part of the lease agreement, **ENSEMBLE THEATRE COMPANY** will make important upgrades to fire and safety equipment for both the Victoria Theatre and Office Building, as well as extensive improvements to the interior of the Victoria Theatre itself, completely transforming it into a **NEW VICTORIA THEATRE** —a modern, comfortable, well-equipped performance hall, with advanced lighting and sound equipment, flexibly designed to accommodate a rich variety of performing, entertainment arts, and other uses, including music, dance, lectures, and film.

For 30 years, **ENSEMBLE THEATRE COMPANY** has presented quality professional theatre to Santa Barbara at the Alhecama Theatre, which it has rented from the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation, which in turn rents the facilities from the State of California State Parks System. The State’s long-term plans do not contemplate a theatre company.

After a routine due diligence period during which **ENSEMBLE THEATRE COMPANY** will confirm key physical and structural aspects of the building, the lease will commence, allowing **ENSEMBLE THEATRE COMPANY** to begin renovating the Victoria Theatre to a modern, state-of-the-art performance facility of which the Santa Barbara community can be proud.

The **City of Santa Barbara** prepared a formal study of its performing arts facilities that concluded that there is a strong need for a 300-seat theatre in the downtown performing arts area, and that **ENSEMBLE THEATRE COMPANY** would be the ideal company to operate such a theatre. The lease to **ENSEMBLE THEATRE COMPANY** will fulfill that vision.

The lease of the Victoria Theatre to **ENSEMBLE THEATRE COMPANY** will be the culmination of years of thoughtful and productive discussions between **ENSEMBLE THEATRE COMPANY** and the Victoria **BUILDING COUNCIL**, which represents the three owners of the building.

ENSEMBLE THEATRE COMPANY is very proud that our proposal has the strong support of leading Santa Barbara philanthropists, foundations and leaders:

“The Victoria Theatre will be a great home for Ensemble Theatre Company. It will make an important contribution to the performing arts and to the economic health of the downtown. We strongly support this wonderful addition to the downtown.”

Michael and Anne Towbes

“It has long been my dream that Santa Barbara have an beautiful intimate theatre in the performing arts district, and that it would become the new home for Ensemble Theatre Company. This is a very exciting development that is good for all of Santa Barbara.”

Léni Fé Bland

“Relocation of Ensemble Theatre Company to the Victoria Theatre completes the vision for the downtown arts corridor, guarantees availability of the theatre to Unity for its important annual telethon, is a great use of a wonderful facility, and will enable Ensemble Theatre Company to prosper.”

Tom Parker, President of the Hutton Foundation

“The City has long sought a high quality, modern 300-seat theatre in the downtown performing arts theatre. I am so pleased to hear this wonderful news.”

Mayor of Santa Barbara Marty Blum

“We have worked for nearly 20 years for this accomplishment, which will become one of the crown jewels in our vision for the downtown performing arts facilities.”

Santa Barbara Council Member Roger Horton

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