

LOUISVILLE MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM

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Press Release

Louisville Memorial Auditorium Foundation Awarded \$75,000 Pipe Organ Grant!

December 9th 2020

Louisville, KY – Louisville Memorial Auditorium Foundation, Inc. is proud to announce receiving a \$75,000 grant from the Wyncote Foundation to continue further restoration of the **world's largest Pilcher Pipe Organ** located in the historic Louisville Memorial Auditorium.

Earlier this year, the auditorium foundation was created to ensure the community's only **WWI War Memorial and public auditorium** has a separate organization focused on preservation efforts. **"We are grateful to the Wyncote Foundation for their recognition and understanding the importance of preserving the Pilcher Pipe Organ. This generous grant will assist in the restoration of a world class theater organ."** said Alfred Welsh / President, Louisville Memorial Auditorium Foundation.

Wyncote Foundation's generous contribution is a matching grant which, once achieved, will fund extensive repairs and rebuilding of the pipe organ's mechanisms. Additional work will include electrical upgrades to sufficiently power the system changes. **"This grant will help us alleviate all mechanical issues which are either problematic right now, or which are likely to become problematic within the next five years. Whereas past efforts have concentrated on specific areas where serious failures have occurred, this funding will allow us to pursue the numerous smaller issues which are keeping the great Pilcher organ from playing in a reliable manner,"** said David C. Schroth, Jr. of D.C. Schroth Organ Builders.

To assist with matching the goal, supporters can visit (www.lmafoundation.org) to make generous donations while learning more about the mission.

"It's a great day! This gift will be the culmination of 44 years, Philip Hines and I have diligently promoted the organ's importance to the community. Finally, all the notes of each rank will play, thereby eliminating the need for substitute stops by the performer when a particular stop does not play all its notes. In my lifetime I never expected the organ to be fully functional," said Tim Baker, President of William H. Bauer Foundation.

In the past, **William H. Bauer Foundation** funded various pipe organ projects by hosting benefit events to raise awareness and financial support of the **Henry Pilcher's Sons OPUS 1454 Pilcher Pipe Organ**. These included organ concerts, masquerade balls and movie presentations.

When the current **COVID-19 public health pandemic cancelled the 91st season**, it was obvious additional funding sources would be needed to continue both pipe organ and auditorium restoration projects.

The auditorium's foundation has goals of raising funds to install heating and air systems to the building, as well as improvements to the auditorium's ceiling, seating, and stage systems. **"The Memorial Commission is excited that this grant will help restore the iconic pipe organ and represents another important step to restoring the auditorium to its original 1930's glory,"** said Hunter Louis, Chairman of Louisville Memorial Commission.

This past year, campaigning also generated anonymous donations to landscape the grounds. Among the areas refurbished included the courtyard showcasing the **Memorial Flaggpole, originally presented in 1933 by Jefferson County American Legion honoring Women of Kentucky who served in WWI.**

Another significant contribution made anonymously is allowing the main lobby's distinctive stonework to be professionally cleaned. **"This process will enhance the architecturally beauty of the Greek Revival design which is a memorable setting for weddings, benefits and other events,"** said, Kelly Gream, Executive Director of Louisville Memorial Auditorium.

Like other entertainment venues, the auditorium remains closed due to current COVID-19 restrictions issued by the Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. In the meantime, improvements will continue throughout the multi-purpose facility, with focus on event and office spaces available for rental.

Visit (www.louisvillememorialauditorium.com) to learn more about the landmark as a venue and memorial.

About the Pilcher Pipe Organ

The Henry Pilcher's Sons Opus 1454 organ at Memorial Auditorium is the largest instrument constructed by the firm who built organs in Louisville between 1874 and 1944. In addition to the many instruments which dot the Kentucky countryside, they provided quality installations in the far reaches of the U.S., including several in Texas, California, and New York.

The Memorial Auditorium installation is no exception to their legacy. In fact, its core tonal philosophies, while reflecting those of its time, calling for warm "orchestral" voicing, was not limited by this factor as were many contemporary instruments. It was quite capable of rendering the vast repertoire available for organs. The placement in the four corners of the auditorium provided a unique quadraphonic experience before the invention of stereophonic recordings. It was considered the pride and joy of the Louisville music scene at the time, and some of the greatest world-class organists have graced it's bench, including Charles Courboin (organist of St. Patrick's Cathedral, NYC), Marcel Dupre (Organist of St. Sulpice, Paris), E. Power Biggs and others.

Louisville Memorial Auditorium

Louisville Memorial Auditorium celebrated its 90th Anniversary on Memorial Day Monday, May 27th 2019. Then in spring of 2020, the 91st season was cancelled due to the COVID-19 public health pandemic. Currently the unique multi-purpose facility is awaiting guidelines from the Commonwealth of Kentucky's Governor to resume operations.

The unique venue offers rich history, architectural beauty, and a remarkable stage experience complete with lighting and sound systems to produce a memorable event, a Louisville Landmark on the National Register of Historic Places, dedicated on Memorial Day in 1929. The auditorium was built from the outgrowth of two movements: one for a public auditorium, the other for a memorial to commemorate the deeds of the sons and daughters of Louisville, KY and Jefferson County who served in WWI. Over the years many concerts, graduations, dance recitals and competitions, stage productions and other interesting events have been held at the venue. Under new management, the non-profit will be inviting weddings and meeting events to be held at the historic landmark.

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