

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating Shea's Performing Arts Center in Buffalo, New York, upon the occasion of its 90th Anniversary

WHEREAS, The arts, in whatever form depicted, are central to human expression; they are truly a universal language and their contribution to the development of friendship and understanding among all peoples cannot be overestimated; and

WHEREAS, The history, the heritage, and the lives of the people of all countries and all cultures are portrayed in their music and dance; the art and act of sharing them enriches us altogether; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend those illustrious organizations that have brought entertainment and cultural enrichment to the citizens of the great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate Shea's Performing Arts Center in Buffalo, New York, upon the occasion of its 90th Anniversary; and

WHEREAS, Shea's Performing Arts Center, formerly known as Shea's Buffalo Theatre, opened to the public on January 16, 1926, just three years before the start of the Great Depression; the palatial "Wonder Theatre" began showing silent movies and staging shows highlighting stars like the Marx Brothers, Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, and Gracie Allen; and

WHEREAS, Architects C.W. and George L. Rapp of Chicago designed and modeled the theater after a European opera house, and Tiffany Studios created the interior of neo-Spanish Baroque design; and

WHEREAS, Through the years and especially in the 1950s and 1960s, downtown Buffalo experienced a spiraling decline affecting its movie theaters and, consequently, many of the theaters were replaced by multiplex movie houses located in the suburbs; Loews Corporation purchased Shea's Buffalo Theatre and continued to show movies, but the beautiful movie palace had become a shadow of its former glorious self; and

WHEREAS, In December of 1974, the City of Buffalo foreclosed on Shea's Buffalo Theatre for back taxes; subsequently, the not-for-profit group, Friends of Buffalo Theater, organized in 1975 to save the former glorious theater from the wrecking ball; and

WHEREAS, Beginning with the theater's Mighty Wurlitzer organ, which had been neglected for so long that mushrooms were growing in the organ's chambers, the group worked to restore Shea's Buffalo Theatre until 1979; and

WHEREAS, In 1980, the Shea's O'Connell Preservation Guild began management of the building and guided restoration efforts until April of 1999; and

WHEREAS, Since 1999, restoration of Shea's Performing Arts Center has continued through generous financial support from local government, foundations and fundraisers; and

WHEREAS, Recent renovations include the return of the marquee and blade sign, preservation of the original box office and grand lobby and a new loading dock to help with the enhancement of the technical and visual aspects of the performances as well as expansion of the original stage to 50 feet deep; and

WHEREAS, The expansion of the stage has helped to bring some of the most elaborate and exciting traveling shows to Buffalo, such as "Les Miserables", "Miss Saigon", and "Phantom of the Opera"; and

WHEREAS, Today, Shea's Performing Arts Center is a vital component of community events, attracting thousands of theatergoers through its doors

each year; the historic theater has become one of the top grossing one-

week touring Broadway subscription markets in the United States and is currently Western New York's most financially successful art venue; and

WHEREAS, It is most fitting that we take time to celebrate the arts of our Nation, to honor our artists, and to express our appreciation to everyone who patronizes the arts; and as we celebrate the arts, we celebrate and give thanks to our American freedom, the only atmosphere in which artists can truly create and in which art is truly the expression of the soul; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Shea's Performing Arts Center in Buffalo, New York, upon the occasion of its 90th Anniversary, fully confident that it will continue to enjoy the sparkling success which has so characterized its past; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Shea's Performing Arts Center.