



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Donald T. Sanders, Executive Artistic Director
Kathy McKean, Managing Director

MIFA OFFERS SNEAK PREVIEW OF HISTORIC VICTORY THEATRE WPA MURALS AT WISTARIAHURST MUSEUM

HOLYOKE, MA - MIFA Victory Theatre will give a sneak preview of the restored Victory Theatre murals by WPA artist Vincent Maragliotti at Holyoke's Wistariahurst Museum on Thursday, March 9, 2023, at 1:00 PM. For the first time since 2010 when they were removed from the theater, a newly restored section of the murals will be on display so the public can see the work that the conservators at EverGreene Architectural Arts, have done to date on finishing the complete murals for reinstallation in the renovated Victory. The mural section at Wistariahurst will be on view in a year-long exhibition as part of MIFA's contribution to Holyoke's 150th Anniversary Celebration.

The Victory murals were painted in 1942 by artist Vincent Maragliotti as part of the increasingly renowned WPA (Works Project Administration) program. The MIFA Wistariahurst mural exhibition includes information on Maragliotti, the restoration process, and the WPA. Onsite for the sneak preview will be members of EverGreene Architectural Art restoration team installing the exhibit as well as Museum Director Megan Seiler and MIFA's Donald T. Sanders, Executive Artistic Director, and Kathy McKean, Managing Director, and Susan Palmer, Victory Theatre Project Manager. Visit www.wistariahurst.org for exhibition hours. An opening reception will be scheduled at a later date. Stay tuned!

"This is truly an exciting moment for the Victory Theatre restoration project. The public will get to see the inspiring artwork that thrilled audiences for years and will bring pride again in the wonderful assets of our city and region. Although this is only one section, the entire murals are being finished this year and will await that glorious reinstallation moment in our beautiful theater. Thanks to Wistariahurst Museum for partnering with us and a special shout-out to great public government projects like the WPA that support the Arts." - Donald T. Sanders, MIFA Victory Theatre Executive Artistic Director

Vincent Maragliotti (1888-1978), noted Italian American New York artist of Maragliotti Studios, Grand Central Terminal Building, was hired to supervise the decorative treatment of the Victory Theatre's interior after a January 26, 1942, fire. The two murals he painted are an integral historical part of the proscenium and the Victory's stage surround and are recognized as such by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Maragliotti himself described the mural lunette, which will be on display at Wistariahurst as:

Re: The Right panel, "Victory. Man has broken his bonds and has been made free by the spirit of Justice. Lucifer is banished into oblivion. Peace has brought her blessings and Liberty once more reigns. The blessings of Liberty, Peace and Justice are again bestowed upon humanity." - Holyoke Transcript-Telegram, Aug. 13, 1942

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Re: The Left panel, "Depicts war and was inspired by the biblical story of Lucifer, cast out of heaven, venting his vengeance and evil upon mankind. It suggests that the horrible turmoil of the present-day throughout the world marks the approach of the climax, which can result only in either complete victory or complete defeat." – Holyoke Transcript-Telegram, Aug. 13, 1942

Both murals were created when the outcome of WWII was in no way certain.

Maragliotti was known for his work in hotels and theaters throughout the Northeast USA. His murals are in the Copley Plaza Hotel in Boston, the Waldorf-Astoria and Biltmore Hotels, and the Strand, Roxy, Majestic, and Shubert theaters in New York City, and he was commissioned to paint murals in the Pennsylvania State Capital.

"Although he can "paint modern" when he has to, Mr. Maragliotti prefers mural work in a traditional style." - New York Times, January 7, 1964, Page 31.



Victory Mural (V.2) – During cleaning, showing the level of discoloration of the varnish.
Courtesy of EverGreene Architectural Arts.

On June 30, 2010, MIFA was awarded a \$4,500 grant by the [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#) from its [Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors](#) for the restoration of the murals. Also, funds from the [Community Preservation Act](#) are going towards the restoration and reinstallation of these amazing murals.

The Works Progress Administration (WPA)

WPA was created on May 6, 1935, by President Franklin D. Roosevelt as part of the New Deal to boost the country out of the Great Depression. The employment and infrastructure program lasted eight years and employed approximately 8.5 million people. Part of the WPA program was Federal Project Number One which included the Federal Theater Project, Federal Writers' Project, Federal Music Project, Historical Records Survey, and the **Federal Art Project**. Though met with opposition, but lobbied by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, \$27 million of the \$5 billion program went to the arts and led to the creation of the National Foundation of the Arts.

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EverGreene Architectural Arts

Experts in historic preservation, restoration & design. Established in 1978, EverGreene has provided design, restoration, and conservation services for some of the most significant art, architecture, and artifacts across the United States. Their award-winning work on historic landmarks, adaptive reuse, and contemporary environments has earned them an international reputation for being the foremost authority on architectural arts. They have worked on more than 400 theaters; 38 of the fifty state capitols including the US Capitol and other civic buildings; commercial buildings; numerous sacred spaces; and museums. See all of EverGreene's projects and awards at, www.evergreene.com.

Wistariahurst Museum

Wistariahurst is dedicated to preserving Holyoke's history and inspiring an appreciation of history and culture through educational programs, exhibits, and special events. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Wistariahurst is the former home of William Skinner and his family, prominent silk manufacturers, and residents of Holyoke. Today, Wistariahurst Museum provides a variety of programs, events, and history projects aimed at engaging and educating residents about their history, collection, and community. For more information see upcoming events, please visit, www.wistariahurst.org.

MIFA Victory Theatre

Over the past 28 years, MIFA has presented the finest examples of contemporary practice in performing, visual, and literary arts, bringing esteemed artists and world-class events to Holyoke and the west Ma region. This season is no exception! MIFA serves the economic revitalization of Holyoke and the Pioneer Valley through the preservation and reopening of the historical landmark Victory Theatre. To build an appetite for programming at the reopened theater, MIFA presents events in a variety of other venues and virtually, to enhance Holyoke and the region's reputation in arts, tourism & entertainment. Learn more at www.mifafestival.org

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