
ALAMEDA

AN ALAMEDA MEMORY

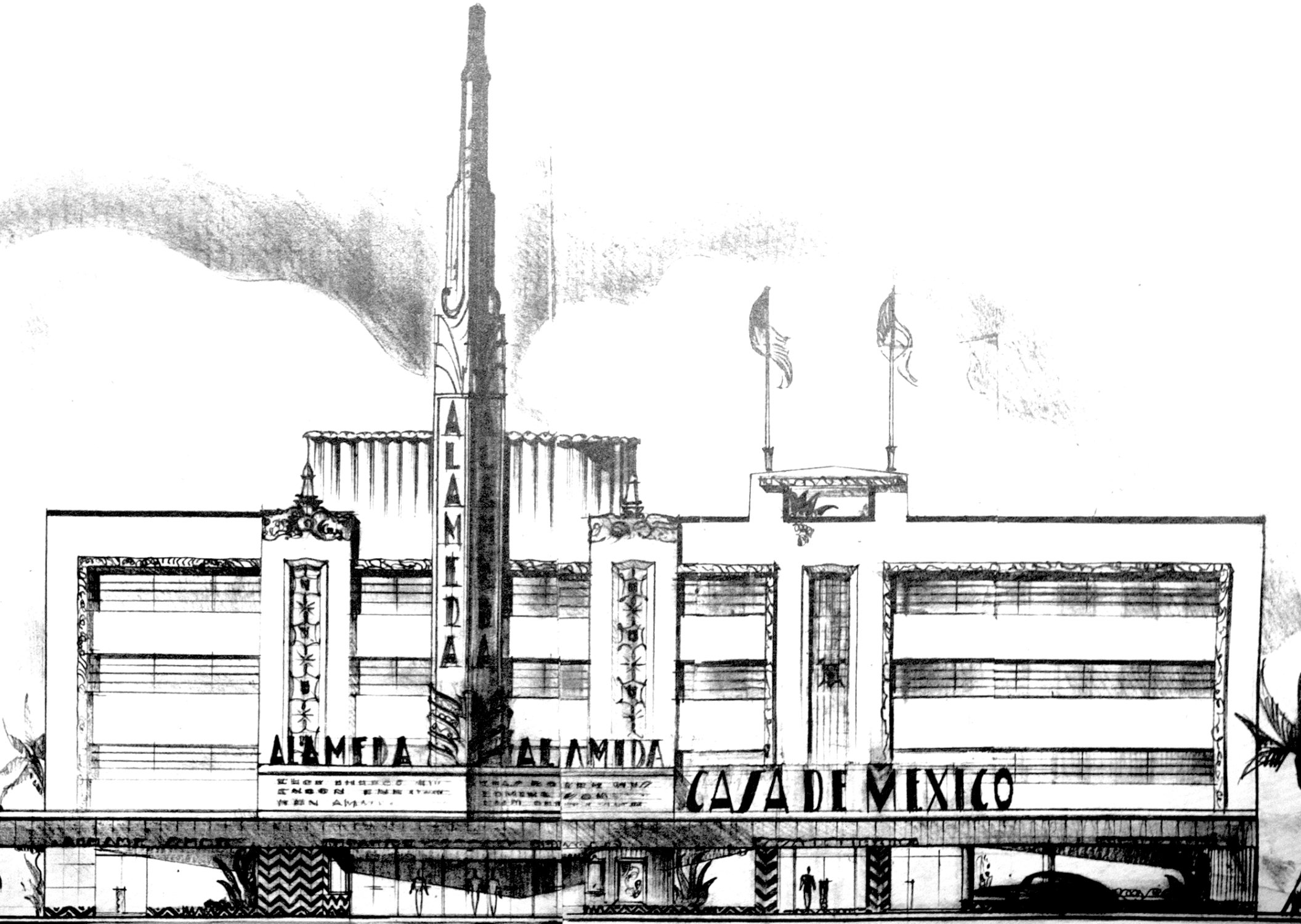
"I was almost 10 years old when the fabulous Alameda Theater opened in 1949. It was by far the most fabulous experience of my life. I pretended to be present at some far-away royal palace waiting to see a king and queen descend the stage. My mom, a cousin and my little brother Robert were awestruck. This was our very own theater. To us it was more majestic than the Majestic Theatre! In many ways it was more spectacular! It was not only a world-class theater where we could watch the latest Mexican movies during the "golden age" of Mexican filmmaking, it was a place where actors, singers and comedians would also perform on stage in person after the movie!

The whole area around the Alameda was like a Hollywood fantasy. There was the Hotel Continental half a block away where they would stay, sometimes for days during their Alameda gigs. Less than two blocks away was the famous Mi Tierra Cafe where the most famous actors and singers like Jorge Negrete, Pedro Infante, José Alfredo Jiménez, Trio Los Panchos, Lola Beltrán, Lucha Villa and many others came for dinner after their performances. Many times, they would join the Mi Tierra Mariachis in song and drinks late into the evening. The whole area was alive and thriving! The Alameda, the Hotel Continental and Mi Tierra became the places to see and be seen. Now, this historic area, re-named El Centro Cultural is about to come alive again…with the potential to be bigger and better than it ever was.

I'm glad to have lived long enough to remember its birth... and look forward to witnessing its rebirth very soon. Let's re-make history together" **– LIONEL SOSA**

The Alameda is the place where people from every corner of our community unite to share their stories, celebrate diversity, and build lasting connections.

In the center is where we come together to honor our shared heritage and embrace the unique contributions of each individual.


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CASA DE MEXICO

ALAMEDA HISTORY

The Alameda Theater was designed by Texas architect N. Straus Nayfach and completed in 1949. The theater was once a beloved home for the San Antonio community to see and participate in Spanish language film, variedades, and the performing arts. At a time when Mexican Americans were confined to segregated seating, the Alameda welcomed all and quickly became a thriving film and performance hub. At 2,400 seats, it became the largest theater in the country dedicated to Spanish language entertainment. Community members recall it as an escape from everyday stress and hardships, and many consider it "El Corazón," the heart, of downtown San Antonio.

In its prime, the Alameda featured presentations from the great legends of Mexican song and screen, including Pedro Infante, the Mexican actor and singer who was hailed as one of the greatest of the golden age of Mexican cinema; Mario Moreno, otherwise known as Cantinflas, who was a celebrated Mexican comic film actor; Maria Félix, the Mexican film actress and singer known as La Doña, who was considered to be one of the most beautiful actresses of the 20th century; and Vincente Fernández, the Grammy and Latin Grammy award-winning singer who remains one of the best selling Mexican artists of all time.

The Alameda closed in the late 1980s, and the City of San Antonio acquired the property in 1994. Hope for revival of the once-thriving hub of activity has remained alive over the years.







INSIDE THE THEATER

The Alameda stands today as a time capsule of late-1940s theater design, significant on a global scale and sentimental to generations of San Antonians. A recent assessment confirmed that the Alameda has retained a high degree of integrity, with many interior finishes dating back to original construction.

Overlooking the first-floor lobby, the mezzanine is lined with etched, painted Plexiglas panels featuring tropical foliage. The walls on the mezzanine and orchestra levels feature similar vegetation, said to be pulled directly from Nayfach's sketches from his travels between San Antonio and Mexico. Recessed ceilings and bright paint colors emphasize the curved walls which are typical of the Streamline Moderne style. Throughout the theater, decorative Plexiglas light boxes make for unique interior wayfinding and exit signage.

The decorative glazed tiles used on the Houston Street facade continue throughout the theater's interior, and the women's restroom features intricate pink tile work.

While some elements only require cleaning, others will require careful restoration. The auditorium features two phosphorescent blacklight murals depicting the histories of Texas and Mexico. The murals were designed by San Antonio artist Pedro Teran and rendered by Frank Lackner of the Hanns Teichert Company in Chicago. The murals owe much to the Mexican mural tradition, with gestural images at either end progressing into detailed scenes toward the stage. Lackner layered fluorescent paints rather than blending them, which enhances the murals' striking 3-D appearance when lit.



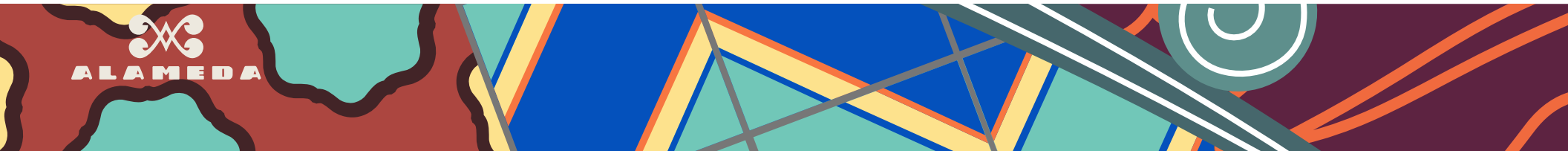
THEATER RESTORATION EFFORTS (2017) TO PRESENT

After a careful planning and design process punctuated by impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Alameda Theater Conservancy developed a $60 million budget for the theater's complete restoration.

In 2017, the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, and Texas Public Radio created a new non-profit performing arts organization, the Alameda Theater Conservancy (ATC), to oversee the renovation and operation of the Alameda Theater complex so that it will once again be the vital presenter of Latino arts and culture.

A significant portion of the capital budget is dedicated to preserving the historic elements within the theater. Once complete, the theater will be entirely renewed, evoking the glamour of the Alameda's heyday while providing modern accessibility to all. Large aluminum bas-relief figures titled "Spirit of Dance" will once again anchor the Grand Foyer, while finishes on the walls and floors mimic those originally installed. Water damage on the walls of the auditorium will be repaired, and murals will be restored using historically appropriate techniques and materials. Plexiglas panels and signage will be polished and painted offsite, returned to their original luster. Chandeliers have been preserved and will be reinstalled in the recessed niches in the auditorium and lobby. Painted tiles will be repaired and meticulously restored throughout, and plaster work will be cleaned and repaired as necessary. Restoration work will be conducted by highly specialized professionals to retain historic integrity and ensure eligibility for historic tax credits.

SCAN TO VIEW THE STORY OF THE ALAMEDA

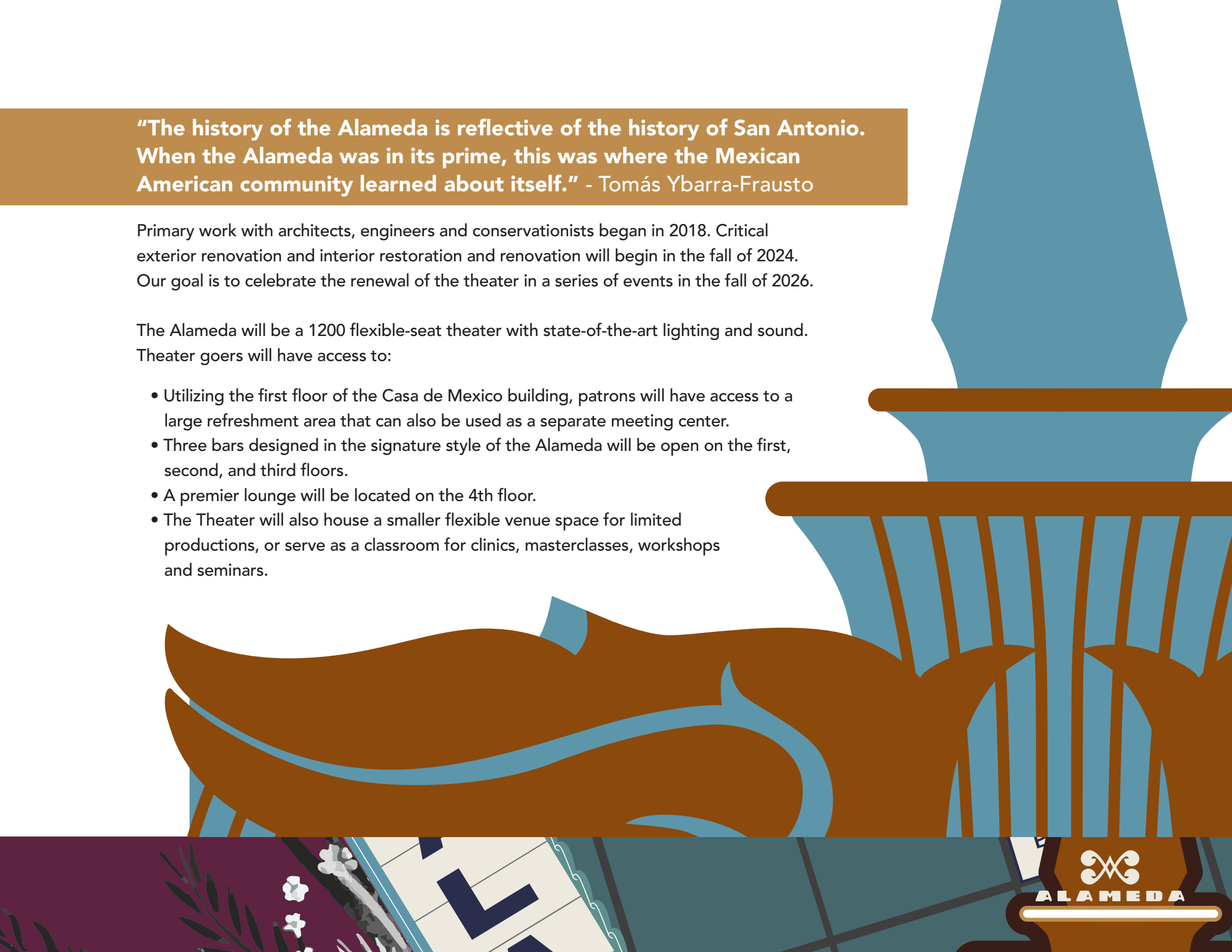


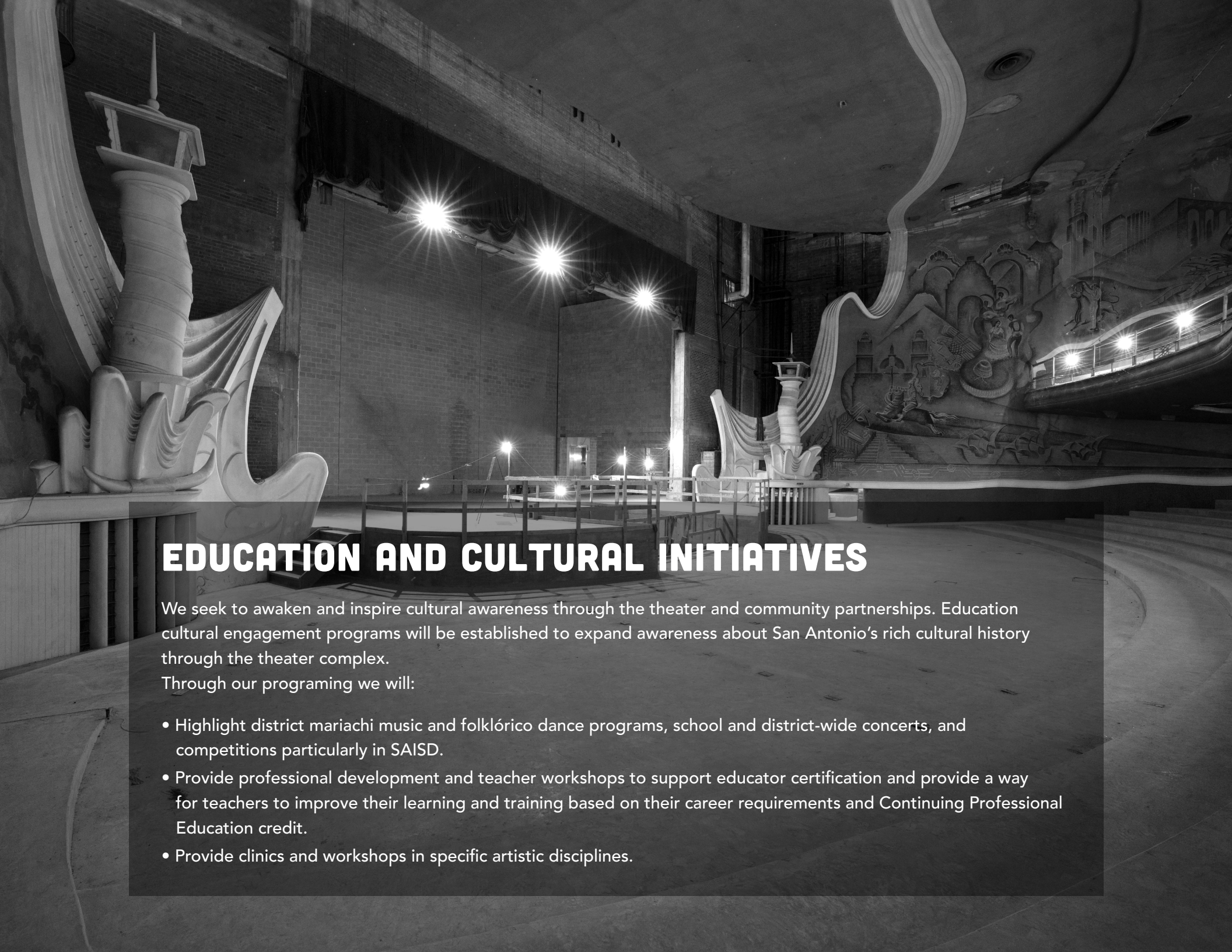
"The history of the Alameda is reflective of the history of San Antonio. When the Alameda was in its prime, this was where the Mexican American community learned about itself." - Tomás Ybarra-Frausto

Primary work with architects, engineers and conservationists began in 2018. Critical exterior renovation and interior restoration and renovation will begin in the fall of 2024. Our goal is to celebrate the renewal of the theater in a series of events in the fall of 2026.

The Alameda will be a 1200 flexible-seat theater with state-of-the-art lighting and sound. Theater goers will have access to:

- Utilizing the first floor of the Casa de Mexico building, patrons will have access to a large refreshment area that can also be used as a separate meeting center.
- Three bars designed in the signature style of the Alameda will be open on the first, second, and third floors.
- A premier lounge will be located on the 4th floor.
- The Theater will also house a smaller flexible venue space for limited productions, or serve as a classroom for clinics, masterclasses, workshops and seminars.





EDUCATION AND CULTURAL INITIATIVES

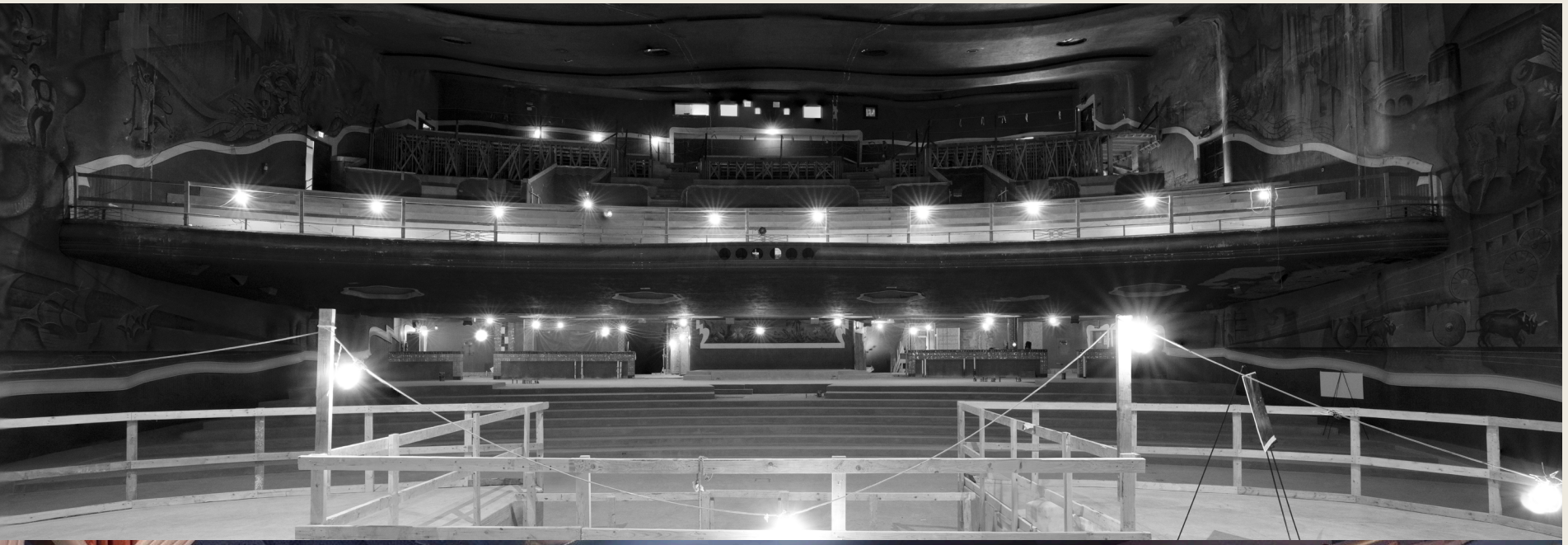
We seek to awaken and inspire cultural awareness through the theater and community partnerships. Education cultural engagement programs will be established to expand awareness about San Antonio's rich cultural history through the theater complex.
Through our programing we will:

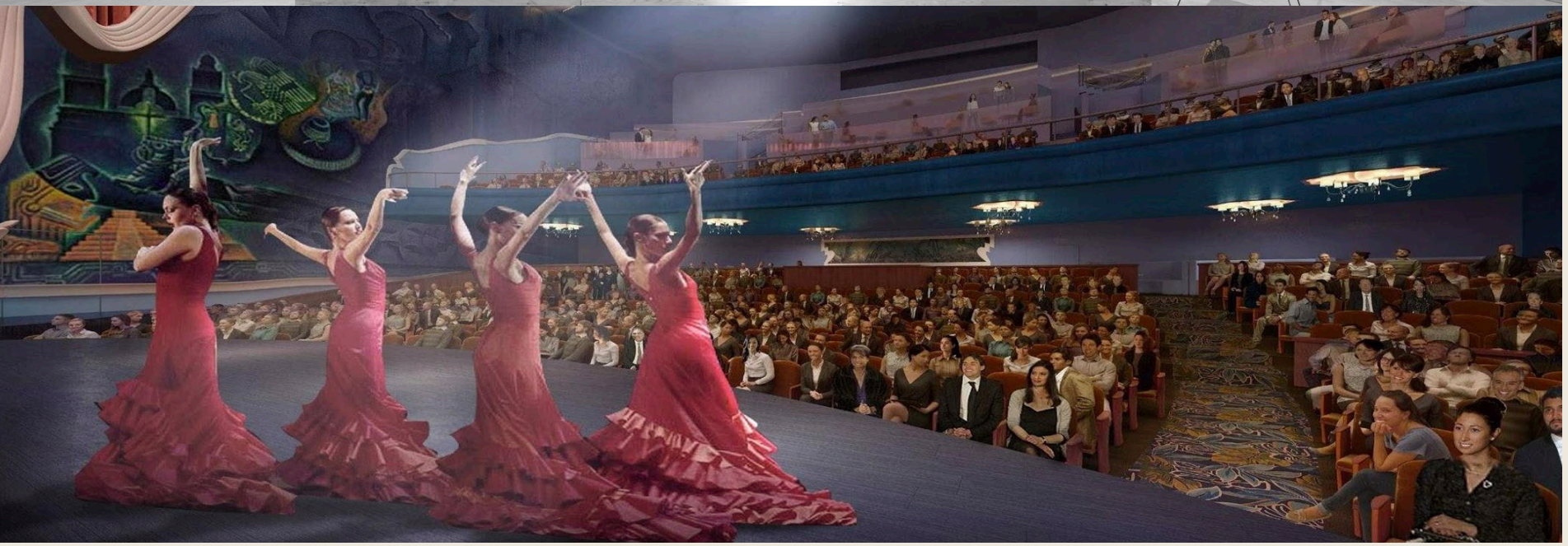
- Highlight district mariachi music and folklórico dance programs, school and district-wide concerts, and competitions particularly in SAISD.
- Provide professional development and teacher workshops to support educator certification and provide a way for teachers to improve their learning and training based on their career requirements and Continuing Professional Education credit.
- Provide clinics and workshops in specific artistic disciplines.



- Sponsor masterclasses that reinforce current Texas TEKs and education goals with short curriculums created by educators and accessible online before the class.
- Tours with a curriculum about the history of the Alameda available online at all times for any visitors to access before touring.
- Speaker series on history and Mexican American culture led by authors, speakers, and professors from local colleges and universities.
- Movies for local film festivals or showings of movies to the general public. The venue can be used by local filmmakers to host their film event either for a school, university, or target audience.

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ALAMEDA
LA GUNILLA II
CON LUCHA VILLA
TRAFICANTES DE PANICO


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THE FUTURE IS HERE

Beyond entertainment, the historic Alameda Theater is a place for education, empowerment, and the preservation of Latino music, dance, and visual arts. The Alameda will be self-supporting through facility rentals, ticket revenue, events, minimal fees for workshops and clinics, and tenant income. Fundraising for operations will be minimal.

The City of San Antonio and Bexar County have recently contributed over $25 million to the restoration of the Alameda Theater. Additional support is expected to be earned through state and federal historic tax credits. The remaining funds will be raised through a charitable capital campaign.

While the City of San Antonio and Bexar County have provided significant funding for the revival and restoration of this historic theater, fully realizing the vision for the new Alameda requires private and philanthropic investment.

Please join us in this exciting campaign to celebrate San Antonio history through the reopening of the Alameda Theater.

Alameda Theater Conservancy
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