

VARIETY ARTS ENTERPRISES

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Subject: "A Vaudeville Retrospective" – Illustrated Lecture, Performance, & Exhibition

Location: _____ **Date:** _____ **Time:** _____

News Release Date: _____

"A Vaudeville Retrospective," the lively illustrated lecture, performance, and exhibition that presents a fascinating look back at early 20th-century popular entertainment, comes to _____
on _____, with performances at _____.

(DATE)

(TIME)

(VENUE & CITY/TOWN)

All but forgotten today, the vaudeville variety show – made up of unrelated "acts" of popular song, dance, comedy, acrobatics, serious lectures, and unusual novelties – was a dominant form of leisure in the years 1880-1930, until the entertainment business was upended by motion pictures and the Great Depression. Yet the influences of vaudeville are still with us today in popular culture, music, and entertainment.

A program designed for adults that is at once literate, informative, and fun, "A Vaudeville Retrospective" tells engaging, context-rich stories of the technological and social forces that set the stage for vaudeville, the leadership that built the genre into a big business, and the economics of vaudeville's decline. Along the way the topic illuminates multiple issues facing American society in the late 19th and early 20th century: race, gender, class, immigration, big business, technology, transportation, communication, population shift, and urbanization.

Conceived and presented by performing artist and historian R.W. Bacon, the program is an illustrated lecture, with digitally-projected graphics and audio/video clips, interspersed with live performance segments. Slipping into his performance role as "The Last Living Vaudevillian," the presenter reprises the spirit (with hot jazz and ragtime ...) and the virtuosity (with dazzling acrobatic juggling ...) of the touring artists who entertained millions at thousands of theatres across the U.S. for five decades. Also traveling with the presentation is a lobby exhibition which amplifies on program content.

Presenter R.W. Bacon is an all-but-retired acrobatic juggler, comic dancer, and jazz/ragtime banjoist – and a nowhere-near-retired historian and museum professional. A graduate of Syracuse University and the Harvard graduate program in Museum Studies, he was a journalist and editor before embarking on a 30-year career to tour nationally with his wife, L.J. Newton, in their now-retired theatrical show, *The Goodtime Ragtime Vaudeville Revival*. Decades of shows were spiced with performances for circuses, revues, TV, and film. R.W. Bacon's father was a 1940s nightclub sleight-of-hand artist; his grandmother an early moviehouse pianist. Early in his career he had the good fortune to encounter other valuable mentors that provided links to authentic vaudeville styles. Since then his study of variety entertainment has contributed to the development of a repertoire of stage specialties rarely seen today. The vaudeville history program is a culmination of his careers in performance, research, and museum interpretation.

"A Vaudeville Retrospective" is a fascinating program of "under-the-radar" history that looks back at a nearly-forgotten institution in early 20th century American life, and serves to illustrate the intertwined relationship of the arts, sciences, and commerce throughout the grand parade of human history. For further information contact _____.

EDITORIAL & DESIGN SERVICES, RESEARCH, & INTERPRETATION for MUSEUMS, HISTORICAL SOCIETIES, & CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Also Representing

A VAUDEVILLE RETROSPECTIVE: THE LIVING MUSEUM OF EARLY 20TH CENTURY POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT

(Featuring R.W. Bacon as "The Last Living Vaudevillian")

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