



## For Immediate Release

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### Old Spanish Days Fiesta and the Lobero Theatre

- **Inaugural Fiesta held for the Grand Opening of the Lobero Theatre**
- **Now Celebrating 87 years as part of the Santa Barbara community**

**Santa Barbara, CA, August 4, 2011** – Eighty-seven years ago today, Santa Barbara was given two enduring gifts to celebrate, the [Lobero Theatre](#) and [Old Spanish Days Fiesta](#). On August 4, 1924, the Lobero opened its doors with a gala production of *Beggar on Horseback* by the Community Arts Association with tickets on sale for \$2, \$1.50, and \$1. Santa Barbara joined in the festivities en masse, commemorating the opening with the inaugural Fiesta and Old Spanish Days.

“... Fiesta is a holiday that began as a small-town family party to mark the resurrection of a cherished institution—a theatre. [It] was an effort ‘to establish as an annual event a few days of festivities in Santa Barbara in which *all the people can celebrate*.’ That, at any rate, is what was printed on the program over for *Beggar on Horseback*. “ \*

Some important circumstances which motivated the first Fiesta in 1924 included a shared feeling among the business people of the city that Santa Barbara should have an annual summer event to entertain and attract visitors, as well as the Community Arts Association of Santa Barbara’s planned opening of the new Lobero Theatre. A member of the Community Arts Association conceived the idea of having a celebration to mark the opening of the new theatre. A committee was formed which began to formulate plans for the celebration, to be comprised of activities including a parade, aquatic and sports events and, of course, a gala celebration at the theatre on its opening night. A third aspect was the desire to celebrate remembrances of parents and grandparents from the old Spanish days of the 1800’s when Spanish customs, dress, music and dance prevailed. During that time, fiestas were held when strangers came to town bearing news of the outside world. \*\*

From its earliest days, the Lobero has been Santa Barbara’s grand stage for both community and professional performances. Originally founded in 1873, The Lobero Theatre is California’s oldest continuously operating theatre. Today the Lobero Theatre is an officially designated [city](#) and [state landmark](#), an [award-winning destination for jazz](#), as well as a treasured architectural icon, beautifully representing Santa Barbara’s iconic Spanish architectural style.

Celebrate Fiesta at the Lobero this weekend with the [Fiesta Comedy Show](#) on Friday, August 5 at 8 p.m., or with the [Don Murray Tribute](#) activities taking place on Saturday, August 6.

Source Material:

- \* Captured Dream, A brief history of the Lobero Theatre. Otis Wickenhaeuser.  
Published by the Lobero Theatre Foundation, © 1990.
- \*\* Quoted with permission, Kathryn McKee, Media Relations, Old Spanish Days Fiesta.