



Photo: Bob Farley/f8Photo

The historic Lyric and Alabama Theatres will be open for tours this Sunday afternoon from 2-4 p.m. Historian Dan Liles will be on hand to give the history of the Lyric. Organ crew chief Larry Donaldson will be available to answer questions about Alabama Theatre's Mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ and the Alabama's technical director, Jeff Kizziah will be up in the projection booth.

The 1,400 seat Lyric opened in 1913 as a vaudeville theatre and according to the Alabama Theatre executive director Cecil Whitmire, it only took five years to force the other four vaudeville theaters to shut down.

Performers like Will Rogers, Jack Benny, George Burns, Milton Berle and the Marx Brothers performed at the Lyric. "I can't help but get worked up about the place thinking of all the famous people who stood on that stage," Whitmire said.

The Lyric ended its run as a vaudeville theatre in 1935 and "the life of the Lyric became a dismal second class theatre," Whitmire said. It closed in the 1950s and reopened in the 1970s as cinema house and later an adult movie theatre.

Only sections the Lyric's ground floor will be open for the tour because most of the theatre is in disrepair Whitmire said. Water leaks and moisture have caused the plaster to deteriorate and the floors to buckle. It was added to the list of the ten most endangered historic sites of Alabama in May. Efforts are on going to save the building and renovate the theatre.

For more information go [the Alabama Theatre's website](#), or call 251-0418. Or click on the image above and check out the photos in The Gallery.