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Lobero Theatre Box Office | 805.963.0761 | [boxoffice@lobero.org](mailto:boxoffice@lobero.org)

Director of Marketing & Communications: Cecilia Martini-Muth | 805.679.6002 | [cmartini@lobero.org](mailto:cmartini@lobero.org)

Marketing & Communications Associate: Anne Wilde | 805.679.6010 | [awilde@lobero.org](mailto:awilde@lobero.org)

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## **Lobero Theatre's New Executive Director Takes the Helm in 2025**

*Santa Barbara, CA, October 21, 2024* – The Lobero Theatre, currently celebrating its Centennial milestone, recently announced that David Asbell will be stepping down as Executive Director. His longtime collaborator Marianne Clark has been appointed by the Board of Directors and will assume the title on January 1, 2025. David started as Manager in 1996 and was appointed Executive Director in 2001. Marianne began in 1997 as Office Assistant and has worked hands-on in various capacities at the historic theater over the years, getting to know the inner workings of the Lobero from the ground up. David will still have a strong hand in all Lobero LIVE events as Program Director.

The Lobero has gone through numerous iterations since its opening in 1873. When David and Marianne began their journey, the organization had been struggling to keep afloat – operating hand to mouth with a very small staff. David, who has a background in theater and dance, had been working in the arts for 20 years before he began at the Lobero, including at the Atlanta Ballet and the Olympic Village at Georgia Tech. During his time at the Lobero, he has built a dedicated team, established strong relationships with the Santa Barbara community, and – with Board mentor Steve Cloud – created Lobero LIVE and Jazz at the Lobero, programs that endure to this day.

Marianne had a performance background before becoming an arts administrator. When asked about why they are so passionate about their positions at the venue, they both agreed that there is something incredibly special about the Lobero. David noted that, “We’re just the stewards of the Lobero right now. There were those who came before us, and those who will come after. But we’re proud of what we’ve been able to accomplish during our time.” Marianne added, “The Lobero’s role as a community asset and the relationships we have with Santa Barbara’s performing arts organizations are deeply important to me. It’s also about including our neighbors, local restaurants, non-profits who are not part of the performing arts but hold their benefits here. The Lobero is genuinely a wonderful place to collaborate and partner with the community.”

One of the biggest challenges they’ve witnessed at the Lobero over the years was that the theater had never enjoyed financial stability, until recently. Following the completion of a major seismic renovation in the mid-90s, the theater experienced the same ups and downs that the community did, including the housing crisis and a global pandemic. But David and his team more than weathered those tough years, continuing to grow the Lobero’s reputation as a quality venue and completing more than \$10 million in capital improvements. In addition, they have built a growing endowment so that the theater is better protected against future financial swings.

Having served the longest term as Executive Director in the Lobero Theatre’s history, David feels this is the appropriate time to make such a transition. “The staff is strong, the organization is financially solid, and I am looking forward to a 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter with fewer responsibilities,” he added. Marianne is excited about her new position and is easing into the role. With experienced leadership, a dedicated staff, committed board, and supportive donors, the Lobero’s future is looking bright!

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