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Raue Center: Where history has been restored

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When you step inside Raue Center For The Arts to see one of their fabulous shows, you may feel as if you are stepping back through time—and for good reason. Raue Center is nearly nine decades old, and it has been meticulously restored to give its guests the feeling of a genuine 1920s-era theatre.

In its former life, the Raue Center building was El Tovar, a vaudeville and movie house opened in 1929. For a few decades, El Tovar provided the community of Northern Illinois with movies, cartoons, and adventure serials—changing its name first to The Lake, and then to the Showplace.

But time took a toll on the community's oldest theatre, and its audiences began to dwindle. With a leaking ceiling, crumbling walls, and an increasingly creaky stage, the aging theatre seemed on the verge of passing into history.

Then the name of Lucile Raue enters the story. Raue, who died in 1994, left behind a substantial trust meant to benefit downtown Crystal Lake. That trust provided the funding necessary to buy and renovate the old theatre, renamed in honor of its patron. Finally, in August 2001, the new Raue Center For The Arts opened to the public.

Since then, Raue Center has provided the community with exceptional entertainment, encompassing everything from live music and ballet to innovative dramas, in an intimate and evocative setting. Before or after the show, you can go upstairs for a drink at 26 North, Raue Center's full-service bar.

To schedule a tour of Raue Center For The Arts, call (815) 356-9212 today. Visit their website at www.rauecenter.org for a list of great upcoming events at the center.