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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Orange County Regional History Center receives national honors for ‘jaw-dropping’ rock exhibition

ORLANDO, Fla. (June 17, 2023) — The [Orange County Regional History Center](#) has received the prestigious Award of Excellence from the American Association for State and Local History for its latest special exhibition, *Figurehead: Music & Mayhem in Orlando’s Underground*. This honor adds to the History Center’s impressive collection of major awards won, totaling 23 since 2016. The exhibition was also featured in Orange TV’s series *Scrapbook*, which won a Gold Telly Award in 2023.

“To have been honored for different projects across just a few years exemplifies the History Center’s role as a national model for leadership in history,” says Pamela Schwartz, the museum’s executive director. “These awards are especially important because they honor projects centered in community engagement in which we work directly with our stakeholders to share their stories.”

The bilingual exhibition tells the story of how concert promoter Figurehead transformed Orlando’s musical landscape between 1985 and 2001, creating a destination for cutting-edge live music that resonates today. Using posters designed by local graphic designers and illustrators, large-scale photos, sound clips and more, the History Center has created an immersive experience of Orlando’s music scene. The exhibition has been augmented by a robust slate of special programming generously supported by the Florida Humanities Council, greatly extending the exhibition’s content and reach.

The exhibition’s attention to detail in capturing the essence of the era has attracted the attention of many visitors, including educator, screenwriter and longtime member of the Orlando music community, Carol Benanti. “[The exhibition is] jaw-dropping,” says Benanti. “[The History Center] has done a brilliant job telling the phenomenal story, frame by beautiful frame, of the musicians, artists, bands, and devoted fans who, without even knowing it, opened a door that will now be open forever.”

Based in Nashville, Tenn., the American Association for State and Local History began its awards program in 1945 to encourage excellence in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history throughout the United States. The History Center has also received outstanding accolades from the association for the exhibition *Yesterday This Was Home: The Ocoee Massacre of 1920* and for the One Orlando Collection Initiative in response to the Pulse nightclub shooting.

An episode about the *Figurehead* exhibition for the Orange TV series *Scrapbook* also won a 2023 Gold Telly Award. Established in 1979, the Telly Awards receive more than 12,000 entries from all 50 states and five continents and constitute the premier honor for video and television across all screens. You can see this episode and more on the History Center’s YouTube channel.

Figurehead: Music & Mayhem in Orlando’s Underground continues at the History Center, 65 E. Central Blvd. in downtown Orlando. To learn more, visit TheHistoryCenter.org.

The Orange County Regional History Center, housed in a historic courthouse at 65 E. Central Blvd. in downtown Orlando, features four floors of permanent and special exhibitions. The museum is a Smithsonian Institution affiliate and accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. It is funded in part by Orange County Government through the Community & Family Services Department under Orange County Mayor Jerry L. Demings and the Board of County Commissioners. The Historical Society of Central Florida Inc. is supported by United Arts of Central Florida and sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture, and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture. For more information, visit TheHistoryCenter.org.

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