

Lobero Theatre Association

# Hats Off to Richard Sherman

By **RICHARD PAYATT** / Special to CASA

**T**HE LOBERO THEATER ASSOCIATION'S annual luncheon had a very, very special guest this year: Richard Sherman of the Sherman

Brothers. Since the luncheon's theme was *Hats Off*, the Coral Casino was packed with lovely ladies in magnificent hats.

Debby Davison acted as Master of Ceremonies for the afternoon, decked out in a delicate straw trilby. She was joined by the president of the Lobero Theater Associates, Annie Williams; Doug Wood, president of the Lobero's Board of Directors; and Jane Litchfield, chairperson of the afternoon's events. The tables brimmed with hatboxes and sheet music as centerpieces. A tasty feast of chicken stuffed with ricotta cheese, white asparagus, and risotto, was deftly served by the Coral Casino's efficient staff. But nothing on the tables could compare with the wild variety of hats on the ladies of the club. Sparkling pink top hats, ascot saucers, peacock feather cloches, straw boaters, and a wide array of Panama hats floated in a cloud of laughing conversation.

But it was not just the hats that were there to be celebrated. The Lobero supporters were there to raise those hats in tribute to composer and lyricist, Richard Sherman. Richard and his brother Robert were Walt Disney's de facto music department for decades. They wrote music for *Mary Poppins*, *Jungle Book*, *Aristocats*, and theme music for the Disneyland park, including *The Tiki-Tiki-Tiki Room*, *A Bright Big Beautiful Tomorrow*, and *It's A Small World After All*. The Sherman Brothers also wrote a string of rock and roll hits, as well as scoring other favorite musicals like *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*.

So, to delight the guests, Sherman entertained from the piano for 45 minutes, mixing songs from his past with memories of how they came to be. Among the most delightful of the memories was the genesis

of the song, *It's A Small World After All*. Walt Disney was taking the Sherman Brothers on a walk through of a mock-up of the ride. Originally, UNICEF, the ride's sponsor for the 1964 World's Fair, wanted the children of the world singing their fifty national anthems. Walt was half way through the ride, when he looked up and hollered, "Kill it!" The music stopped. Fifty national anthems was an unworkable cacophony. Walt shook his head,

looked at the Sherman brothers and said, "You boys have to write something." And so they wrote a tribute to the small children of the world, in the fashion that Walt wanted it to be: as a prayer. So, in his first pass at the verse for the Lobero supporters, Sherman played the song slowly and solemnly; and then he asked everybody in the room to help sing along for a rousing finish.

Sherman is in town to promote a new musical that is heading to Santa Barbara. It is the work of Magic Castle and Mayfair Theater whiz Milt Larsen and Sherman himself. It is called *Pazzazz!* and is filled with the lush music of Sherman, and a clever book

by Larsen. The show is the story of two of vaudeville's finest comedians who struck out on their own to create their own music hall theater in New York. The play is filled with the famous and infamous characters of those halcyon days, including George M. Cohan himself! With direction and choreography by stage, television, and film director, Walter



Jane Litchfield, Event Chair; Doug Wood, Lobero Board President; and Annie Williams, Lobero Theatre Associates President



Debby Davison, Master of Ceremonies



Milt Larsen and Richard Sherman. Sherman is in town helping promote Larsen's production, *Pazzazz* which opens this weekend (March 25-27) at the Lobero Theatre.



Richard Sherman and Lisa Moore



Arlene Larsen, Diana MacFarlane, and Caroline Thompson



Ava Morouse and Jim Morouse, Board Member



T.J. Locker and Dee Dee Barrett

Painter, this tribute to vaudeville hits the stage at the Lobero Theater March 25th through 27th.

*Pazzazz* runs March 25-27 at the Lobero Theater, located at 33 E. Canon Perdido St. For tickets (\$25-\$75) call 963-0761 or visit [www.lobero.com](http://www.lobero.com).



Christian F. Maurer; Jane Maurer; Richard Sherman; and Richard Payatt



Angie Ferraro; John McCunn; and Janet McCunn



Back: Caroline Thompson; Leslie Schneiderman; Arlene Larsen; Diana MacFarlane; Jane Litchfield; Hiroko Benko; and Milt Larsen. Front: Elizabeth Sherman; Richard Sherman; and Shirley Stapleton

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