



## Old Tampa Theatre Finds Fame, Fixes On TV Screen

By KURT LOFT The Tampa Tribune

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TAMPA - When you want to renovate your house but don't have the cash, who you gonna call? Easy: a television show specializing in makeovers.

That's what the Tampa Theatre did, and this week it got some much-needed nail pounding to revamp a few of the original, 80-year-old rooms backstage.

"We thought, what if we contacted a renovation show to see if they would help us?" said Catherine Sanders, a volunteer with the Tampa Theatre Restoration Society. "They liked what we sent in and decided to participate."

The home improvement show, "DIY [Do It Yourself] to the Rescue," currently airs each night at 8 on cable television's DIY Network and at 8 a.m. Saturdays on HGTV. It offers advice from co-hosts Karl Champley and Amy Devers, who guide the renovation during filming.

The Tampa Theatre opened in 1926 and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Considered one of the country's best preserved examples of grand movie palace architecture, it hosts more than 700 events a year, from rock concerts to classic films.

The years, however, have taken their toll, especially behind the scenes. The \$250,000 upgrade - going on this weekend - will restore artist dressing rooms and the Green Room, a private lounge for performers. Much of the work is being done by Beck Construction and local contractors, and all donated time and material for the project.

The renovation is expected to be completed in time for the Dec. 22 concert by Rockapella. The television show will air next fall and should throw a national spotlight on a Tampa treasure, Sanders said.

"We'll get great exposure for the theater," she said. "We obviously want to bring the restoration to the attention of local people, but we also would like to promote it to people outside of Tampa, and with this show we can do that."

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