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UCLA acquires Westwood's historic Crest Theatre

The venue will host live performances and breathe new life into a neighborhood landmark



Los Angeles, CA October 25, 2018 - The UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture along with its performing arts program, the Center for the Art of Performance, announces the acquisition of the Crest Theatre on Westwood Boulevard, a landmark venue that will be transformed into a new off-campus performing arts space that will serve as an important addition to UCLA's rich offering of cultural venues and resources across the city.

UCLA's purchase of the long-dormant theater was made possible by major gifts from actor, writer and director Susan Bay Nimoy, and an anonymous donor. To raise the additional funds needed for the renovations and the establishment of a

program endowment, CAP UCLA is launching a new campaign fueled by a gift that will match all donations up to \$2.5 million in support of the new theater. With an anticipated opening date in 2021, the venue will be re-named the UCLA Nimoy Theater, in honor of Nimoy's late husband, [Leonard Nimoy](#).

"As a long standing supporter of the Center for the Art of Performance, and its inspired artistic director, Kristy Edmunds, I am thrilled to help provide UCLA with a long-awaited state-of-the-art theater," Nimoy said. "My late husband, Leonard Nimoy, and I admire Kristy's passion for the art of performance, her out-of-the-box imagination, razor-sharp intellect and her vision for what the UCLA Nimoy Theater will bring to Los Angeles."

Building on the strength of UCLA's internationally acclaimed public arts institutions and programs, this acquisition reinforces the university's commitment to the arts and public engagement as it approaches its centennial in 2019.

"UCLA has always played an essential role in fostering and nurturing access to the arts for our students and our community. Royce Hall, one of the first four buildings on our campus, and home to CAP UCLA, is an enduring symbol of our intellectual and cultural aspirations," Chancellor Gene Block said. "With Susan Nimoy's gift, UCLA will remain a beacon for artists and students of the arts locally and globally."

The UCLA Nimoy Theater is envisioned as a much-needed public platform for emerging contemporary performing artists across all disciplines whose work seeks an intimate scale, including extraordinary UCLA students and recent alumni, independent practitioners throughout Los Angeles, and national and international visiting artists. The reinvigorated theater, which will be upgraded to current standards and outfitted with advanced technology, will become a dynamic home on the Westside of Los Angeles for both audiences and artists, enabling creative collaboration and presentation in theater, music, digital media, spoken word, dance and contemporary performance.

CAP UCLA will operate and manage the UCLA Nimoy Theater. Under the leadership of Edmunds, CAP UCLA's executive and artistic director, the theater will collaborate with campus arts organizations as well as local and national cultural and community partners to develop ongoing programming.

"I am so grateful to the donors who have made this acquisition possible and whose enduring support for the arts and the work we do at CAP UCLA will allow us to embark on this important transformation of the Crest," Edmunds said. "When completed, the UCLA Nimoy Theater will stand as a home for boldly emerging artists and cultural omnivores. The venue is small enough to engender a welcoming and intimate environment for audiences, while being just large enough for a performer, media artist, dancer or poet to bend the needle towards an enduring impact on a community. Audiences at the UCLA Nimoy will feel that happen night after night, and know that by being there they are an important part of sustaining an environment that enables artists to thrive."

The UCLA Nimoy Theater will return the Crest Theatre to its historic roots as a performing arts venue. The space originally opened in December 1940 as the Westwood Theater, a live performance hall, designed by the architect Arthur W. Hawes. Through ownership changes, it has been known at times as the UCLAN Theatre (in deference to UCLA's nearby campus), Metro Theater and Crest Theatre. It was fully renovated in 1987 by the Walt Disney Company, which replaced the original façade with one reminiscent of an Art Deco Revival movie palace. In 2008, the Crest was designated a Historic-Cultural Landmark by the city of Los Angeles.

"The acquisition and transformation of the Crest Theatre into the UCLA Nimoy is a critical next step in our effort to extend the reach of the arts at UCLA beyond the 420 acres of campus," said Brett Steele, dean of the UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture. "The Nimoy will join the constellation of performance halls, galleries and museums on campus including the Fowler Museum, the New Wight Gallery, the Gloria Kaufman Theater, the Freud Playhouse, Schoenberg Hall and more; and beyond the edges of campus: the Hammer Museum, and the Geffen Playhouse in Westwood, and the UCLA Margo Leavin Graduate Art Studios, a major capital project currently underway in Culver City. We see the arts as a gateway for our students and Los Angeles. The Nimoy will be another critical point of connection."

About the UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture

One of the twelve prestigious professional schools at UCLA, the School of the Arts and Architecture offers leading programs in four degree-granting departments: Architecture and Urban Design, Art, Design | Media Arts and World Arts and Cultures/Dance, and one school-wide minor, the Visual and Performing Arts Education program (VAPAE). Our commitment to innovative education, pioneering research, dynamic public service, and community engagement is fueled by our unwavering belief in the fundamental value of creativity and the artist's unique ability to change the world and shape the future.

About UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance

UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance (CAP UCLA) is dedicated to the advancement of the contemporary performing arts in all disciplines - dance, music, spoken word and theater, as well the emerging digital, collaborative and cross-platforms utilized by today's leading artists. CAP UCLA is where cultural expression and artistic exploration can thrive, audiences can have fun and experience, and through artists of the stage be connected to new ways of seeing that help us better understand the world we live in now.

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