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Wilshire Theatre Honored by Historic American Theatres

Wilshire Theatre Beverly Hills received a prestigious commendation from the League of Historic American Theatres and the City of Beverly Hills for its dedication to the arts for over 75 years recently during the organization's 30th Annual Convention that was held at the theatre.

As the only major functioning

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theatrical venue in Beverly Hills, Mayor Steve Webb presented a proclamation honoring the theatre for its contributions to the community.

The theatre, located at 8440 Wilshire Blvd. just east of La Cienega Blvd., was rushed to completion on September 19, 1930 for the premiere of Charlie Chaplin's film *City Lights*. Since then, it has hosted premieres for films such as *Exodus* and *Trapeze* and has been home to traveling Broadway shows including the recent sold out performances of *Billy Crystal's 700 Sundays*, prominent concerts starring celebrated jazz instrumentalist Chris Botti with an impressive array of guest artists including Sting as part of a *PBS* special.

Originally named the Fox Wilshire, the Wilshire Theatre Beverly Hills was built by Fox West Coast Theaters to house its first-run feature films. Designed by renowned theater architect Charles S. Lee in the Art Deco style, the theater contains rich plaster work and heavy sculpture.

For the first 50 years, the

Wilshire served as one of the premiere movie palaces in Los Angeles. In 1953, the theatre hosted the premiere of *How to Marry a Millionaire* starring Marilyn Monroe, Betty Grable and Lauren Bacall. On Christmas of that same year, Walt Disney exhibited *Grand Canyonscope*, the first Donald Duck cartoon in Cineascope which ran with the studio's classic feature *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*.

The Wilshire Theatre is a favorite location for filming many TV shows and movies including the recently completed *HBO Def Comedy Jam* featuring comedian Dave Chappelle. Numerous charities have held their benefit concerts at the venue including *CAAF's Night of Comedy IV* featuring Ray Romano of *Everybody Loves Raymond* and comedian Garry Shandling.

Presently, the 1910 art deco theater accommodates a vast array of artists and touring Broadway shows and has plans for an upcoming intercultural series.

The theater is in full operation and can be reached at 323-655-4900 or www.wilshiretheatrebeverlyhills.com.



CURTAIN CALL—(L-R) Esther Adir, Exec. Director of Wilshire Theatre Beverly Hills; Bud Keiter (son-in-law of S. Charles Lee, architect of Wilshire Theatre); Rabbi David Baron; J.T. Polman from the League of Historic American Theatres; Beverly Hills Mayor Steve Webb; and Connie Keiter (daughter of S. Charles Lee)