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Fact Sheet

CENTER THEATRE GROUP

AHMANSON THEATRE | MARK TAPER FORUM | KIRK DOUGLAS THEATRE

Michael Ritchie, Artistic Director | Meghan Pressman, Managing Director | Douglas C. Baker, Producing Director
Gordon Davidson, Founding Artistic Director

Founded in 1967, Center Theatre Group, a non-profit organization, is one of the largest and most active theatre companies in the nation, programming seasons year-round at the 1,600 to 2,100-seat Ahmanson Theatre and the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum at The Music Center of Los Angeles, as well as the 317-seat Kirk Douglas Theatre in downtown Culver City.

With the Ahmanson, the Taper and the Douglas, Center Theatre Group has a combined total of more than 40,000 season ticket holders, and a total audience exceeding 700,000 each year.

Center Theatre Group's mission is to provide Los Angeles, national and international audiences with the greatest range of theatrical entertainment possible from one theatre company, from groundbreaking new works to explosive productions of the classics to hit Broadway plays and musicals.

Center Theatre Group believes that the art of theatre is a cultural force with the capacity to transform the lives of individuals and society at large.

Michael Ritchie has been the Artistic Director of Center Theatre Group since 2005. In his 15 seasons at Center Theatre Group's helm, Ritchie selected more than 200 productions for the three theatres, including 45 world premieres and nine U.S. premieres.

Prior to Ritchie, Founding Artistic Director Gordon Davidson led the Taper for 38 years, the Ahmanson for 16 years and produced the inaugural season at the Kirk Douglas Theatre.

Ahmanson Theatre

At the Ahmanson Theatre, Center Theatre Group presents a wide range of dramas, musicals, comedies and classic revivals. In Michael Ritchie's first season, the U.S. premiere of the musical "The Drowsy Chaperone" and the world premiere of the John

Kander/Fred Ebb/Rupert Holmes musical “Curtains” were presented at the Ahmanson; both moved to Broadway in consecutive seasons and received a combined total of 21 Tony Award nominations. Other world premiere musicals at the Ahmanson include “Soft Power,” “Minsky’s” and two musicals that moved to Broadway—“9 to 5: The Musical” and “Leap of Faith” (which received a 2012 Tony Award nomination for Best Musical).

The Ahmanson also presents touring productions of blockbuster Broadway musicals and dramas such as “Dear Evan Hansen,” “War Horse,” “August: Osage County,” “Next to Normal,” “American Idiot,” “Fela!,” “Mary Poppins,” “Jersey Boys,” “Avenue Q,” “The Color Purple,” “Spring Awakening,” “Monty Python’s Spamalot,” Edward Albee’s “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?” and “Matilda.”

Thirteen plays by Neil Simon (six of them world premieres, including the Tony Award-winning “Biloxi Blues”) have been presented at the Ahmanson, as well as the works of leading American playwrights such as Wendy Wasserstein, August Wilson, A.R. Gurney, Terrence McNally, John Guare and Arthur Miller.

Other Ahmanson highlights include the original Broadway cast in Yasmina Reza’s “God of Carnage,” which broke all Center Theatre Group box office records for a play; Angela Lansbury in “Blithe Spirit”; Cicely Tyson, Vanessa Williams and Blair Underwood in “The Trip to Bountiful”; the renowned Kennedy Center production of “Follies” with most of the original Broadway cast; “The Humans” also reassembling most of the original Broadway cast; “The Scottsboro Boys”; Baz Luhrmann’s production of Puccini’s “La Bohème”; Matthew Bourne’s “Swan Lake,” “Cinderella,” “The Car Man,” “Play Without Words,” “Edward Scissorhands,” “Sleeping Beauty” and “The Red Shoes”; Tony Kushner’s musical “Caroline, or Change”; and Sidney Kingsley’s “Dead End.”

In addition to “Curtains,” “The Drowsy Chaperone,” “9 to 5: The Musical” and “Leap of Faith,” the Ahmanson has been represented on Broadway as a co-producer of the revival of Peter Shaffer’s “Amadeus”; Matthew Bourne’s “Swan Lake”; August Wilson’s “The Piano Lesson,” “Two Trains Running” and “Seven Guitars”; Frank Loesser’s “The Most Happy Fella” and “Smokey Joe’s Cafe.”

Mark Taper Forum

As one of the top resident theatres in the country, the Mark Taper Forum has developed an impressive number of Pulitzer Prize-winning plays, including Mark Medoff’s “Children of a Lesser God,” Michael Cristofer’s “The Shadow Box,” Robert Schenkkan’s “The Kentucky Cycle” and Tony Kushner’s “Angels in America,” Part One – “Millennium Approaches,” and has earned a number of distinguished honors including a Tony Award for Theatrical Excellence (in 1977—the second resident theatre in the country to receive this award). Two Taper plays, “The Kentucky Cycle” and “Angels in

America,” were the first to receive the Pulitzer Prize without initially having a New York production. And in the 1994 Tony Awards, three out of the four plays nominated for Best Play were Taper plays (Anna Deavere Smith’s “Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992” and “The Kentucky Cycle” were nominated with “Angels in America,” Part Two – “Perestroika,” which won the award).

More recent Taper productions include the world premieres of Jordan Harrison’s “Marjorie Prime,” which was named a 2015 Pulitzer Prize finalist; Jason Robert Brown’s musical “13,” which was presented on Broadway; Lisa Loomer’s “Distracted”; David Henry Hwang’s “Yellow Face,” which moved to The Public Theater in New York; “Water & Power” by Richard Montoya for Culture Clash; and Randy Newman’s “Harps & Angels.”

Other highlights of the past few seasons include “Clybourne Park,” which won the 2012 Tony Award for Best Play, and for which Center Theatre Group was a producer of its Broadway presentation; Steppenwolf’s “Linda Vista” which also went on to Broadway; a new production of David Mamet’s “Oleanna,” which moved to Broadway; Ayad Akhtar’s “Disgraced”; Suzan-Lori Parks’ “Father Comes Home From the Wars (Parts 1, 2, & 3)”; the first major U.S. revival of “Bent” since its Broadway premiere in 1979; the Donmar Warehouse productions of the musical “Parade”; the drama “Red” with Alfred Molina and Jonathan Groff; a startling production of Martin McDonagh’s “The Lieutenant of Inishmore” with Chris Pine; hysterically funny productions of “Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike” and “Buyer & Cellar”; the continuance of Center Theatre Group’s relationship with Deaf West Theatre with a new production of the musical “Pippin”; the American premieres of David Hare’s “Stuff Happens” and Joshua Sobol’s “iWitness”; the West Coast premieres of Luis Alfaro’s “Electricidad” and David Mamet’s “Romance”; August Wilson’s “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom,” “Joe Turner’s Come and Gone,” “Radio Golf,” “Gem of the Ocean,” “King Hedley II” and “Jitney”; and the revival of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s “Flower Drum Song” with a new book by David Henry Hwang.

During the 2007 – 2008 season, the Taper underwent a major interior renovation and much-needed updating of its technical capabilities and audience amenities. The theatre’s lobby more than doubled in size, and new technology and space improvements brought the theatre to 21st century state-of-the-art standards.

Kirk Douglas Theatre

The Kirk Douglas Theatre is the newest member of Center Theatre Group’s family of theatres. In 2002 Center Theatre Group began the process of transforming a historic 1940s movie house in the heart of Culver City into an intimate theatre venue.

The theatre, which was named for its major donor, film icon and philanthropist Kirk Douglas, opened in October 2004 and in its history has had three works move to

Broadway: the world premieres of Alex Timbers' and Michael Friedman's musical "Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson," Rajiv Joseph's dark comedy "Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo" and the revival of William Inge's "Come Back, Little Sheba." "Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo" was also named a 2010 Pulitzer Prize finalist.

Other world premieres at the Douglas include Jennifer Haley's "The Nether" (which was subsequently produced in London and New York), Marco Ramirez's "The Royale," Eric Rosen's and Matt Sax's musical "Venice" and Lisa Kron's "The Wake" (both of which moved to The Public Theater in New York), David Mamet's farce "Keep Your Pantheon," the Center Theatre Group/Deaf West Theatre musical "Sleeping Beauty Wakes," Jon Robin Baitz's "The Paris Letter" and his political satire "Vicuña," Nancy Keystone's "Apollo Part 1: Lebensraum" and Douglas Steinberg's "Nighthawks."

Other productions of note are "Endgame" with renowned Beckett interpreters Alan Mandell and Barry McGovern, Young Jean Lee's "Straight White Men," the Gate Theatre Dublin production of "Krapp's Last Tape" with John Hurt, the Druid and Atlantic Theater Company production of Martin McDonagh's "The Cripple of Inishmaan," Danai Gurira's "Eclipsed" and "The Convert" (the latter was commissioned by Center Theatre Group), "No Child ..." by Nilaja Sun, The Civilians' "This Beautiful City," Douglas Carter Beane's "The Little Dog Laughed" and the American premiere of David Greig's "Pyrenees."

In 2017 Center Theatre Group launched Block Party, an initiative focused on supporting and highlighting Los Angeles area theatres through the sharing of audiences, ideas and resources. Los Angeles is home to more 250 theatre companies—including more small theatres than New York—featuring an abundance of talent, diversity and ingenuity. To celebrate the vibrant theatre of this city, Block Party presents recently produced productions from local theatre companies as part of the Kirk Douglas Theatre subscription season. Block Party was designed to strengthen relationships within the Los Angeles community, create additional avenues for Center Theatre Group to become familiar with local playwrights, actors, directors and designers and to create conversation and collaboration between Center Theatre Group staff and the staff of theatre companies throughout Los Angeles.

A popular feature of the Kirk Douglas Theatre is The Lounge, where patrons can enjoy a cocktail before and after the show in the comfortable lobby of the theatre and chat with the well-informed and engaging staff.

Patrons are encouraged to come early and explore the interactive displays and activities in The Lounge that are specially crafted for most of the productions. Past productions have included experiences as diverse as a punching bag in the historic ticket booth outside the theatre (for "The Royale"), a recording and listening station where patrons can record memories of pivotal moments in their lives (for "Krapp's Last Tape") and a series of citizenship tests that patrons could take to win prizes (for "American Night: The Ballad of Juan José").

Center Theatre Group's Education and Community Partnerships

Center Theatre Group's Education and Community Partnerships department is one of the most active theatre education programs in the country and patrons from more than 300 schools throughout Southern California each year. The focus of Center Theatre Group's education programs is to inspire current and future audiences to discover theatre and its connection to their lives, to invest in the training, support and development of emerging, young and early career artists and arts professionals, and to contribute to the community-wide efforts to improve the quality and scope of arts education in Los Angeles. Center Theatre Group's Education and Community Partnerships department manages programs that include extensive theatre arts programming in classrooms, enrichment and networking opportunities for theatre teachers and theatre arts training for high school students. In addition, Center Theatre Group provides first-rate theatre experiences for Los Angeles youth with its student matinee program that spans all three theatres.

Center Theatre Group's Artistic Development Program

The Artistic Development Program fosters the development and production of new work in all theatrical styles and forms, ensuring that a variety of theatrical experiences will be available on Center Theatre Group's stages and beyond. Under the program, Center Theatre Group commissions local, national and international playwrights, as well as ensembles and artistic collaborators, and then works closely with them to create new plays, musicals and other boundary-breaking theatrical works. Center Theatre Group also partners with other Los Angeles companies to present and co-produce work, and develop plays and musicals in collaboration with other resident theatre companies and independent producers.

Center Theatre Group's Community Programs

Center Theatre Group has many community programs that are designed to make the theatre-going experience accessible, informative and pleasurable for all.

Center Theatre Group's ACCESS program (formerly called Project D.A.T.E.) provides special services for disabled communities: for deaf audiences, summaries of the play or musical are mailed in advance, pre-show seminars, performances and post-show discussions (all with ASL interpreters) are scheduled, and open captioning is available (only at the Ahmanson Theatre ACCESS performances); for blind patrons, audience members have the option of hearing audio description of the performance

through headsets (which are offered free of charge) as experienced audio describers guide the patrons through the production, describing sets, costumes and the onstage action.

Regularly scheduled, post-show discussions, Stage Talks, are held for every show and can include guest speakers, actors, designers and director from the production. Along with Stage Talks, Center Theatre Group regularly hosts moderated discussions with panels of renowned experts, community opinion-makers and cultural thought-leaders for its Community Conversations. Community Conversations encourages dialogue about context, issues and ideas to find a voice on Center Theatre Group's stages.

The Taper, the Ahmanson and the Douglas are all wheelchair accessible and provide Sennheiser Sound System headsets for the hard of hearing.

Center Theatre Group Season Tickets

A Center Theatre Group season ticket guarantees the best seat in the house. Season ticket holders are offered free ticket exchange, free replacement of lost tickets, priority ticket offers to non-subscription events and other season ticket-holder perks. Center Theatre Group's Design Your Own package gives audience members the opportunity to make their own selection of four or more productions at any of the three theatres. Passport is a theatre membership that provides flexibility in the purchase of tickets to every show at Center Theatre Group's three theatres for up to 50% off the single ticket price.

Center Theatre Group's: Phone Numbers, Website and Social Media

To Purchase Tickets by Phone	(213) 628-2772
Season Ticket Services	(213) 972-4444
Center Theatre Group Voice Mail	(213) 972-7353
Publicity Office	(213) 972-7376
Publicity Office Email	CTGMedia@CenterTheatreGroup.org
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