

# Ford Amphitheatre



## L.A.'S OASIS UNDER THE STARS

For sheer beauty and intimacy it's hard to beat the Ford Amphitheatre for summer entertainment under the stars. The open-air amphitheatre sits on a 45-acre park-like setting in the Cahuenga Pass and is set against a backdrop of cypresses and chaparral in the Hollywood Hills. It is relatively intimate: no patron is more than 96 feet away from the stage. One of the oldest performing arts venues in Los Angeles still in use, the theatre hosts music, dance, film, theater and family events May through October.

The Ford is a great place to socialize with friends and family. Grounds open two hours before evening performances and one hour before family performances to give patrons a chance to relax and eat..



Children are admitted free to the Ford's Big!World!Fun! family series on Saturday morning.

**Picnicking:** You can dine in the terraced entryway or the amphitheatre. Bring your own food and beverage or take advantage of the options below.

**Box dinners:** Order in advance (at least 24 hrs. prior to performance) and avoid waiting in line. Your dinner will be ready when you arrive.

**Varied menu:** Food and beverages are available in the outdoor snack bar on the amphitheatre level (3) or the indoor bar on the middle level (2).



Many world culture events, like the 2005 Korean Dance Festival, are presented at the Ford.

The Ford Amphitheatre Summer Season is a program of **Enriching Lives**



Complete Ford information  
and online ticket purchase:

**[www.FordTheatres.org](http://www.FordTheatres.org)**

Box Office: 323 461-3673

Press contact:

Linda Chiavaroli, Director of Communications,  
213-202-5935, [lchiavaroli@arts.lacounty.gov](mailto:lchiavaroli@arts.lacounty.gov)



*March of the Penguins* had its L.A. premiere at the Ford in June 2005 as part of the Los Angeles Film Festival, one of a number of film events included in the summer season.

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## HISTORY

The amphitheatre was built in 1920 as the site of the Pilgrimage Play. The author, Christine Wetherill Stevenson, believed the rugged beauty of the Cahuenga Pass would provide a dramatic outdoor setting for the play. Together with Mrs. Chauncey D. Clark, she purchased this land along with that on which the Hollywood Bowl now sits. A wooden, outdoor amphitheatre was built on this site; the play was performed by noted actors every summer from 1920 to 1929, until the original structure was destroyed by a brush fire in October 1929.

The present theatre, constructed of poured concrete and designed in the style of ancient Judaic architecture to resemble the gates of Jerusalem, was built on the same site and opened in 1931. The Pilgrimage Play was again performed here until 1964, interrupted only by World War II, when the structure was converted to dormitories for servicemen. In 1941 the land was deeded to the County of Los Angeles. The Pilgrimage Play continued to be presented until a lawsuit in 1964 forced its closure because of its religious nature.

The County continued to use the amphitheatre for a variety of concerts and performances, but public attendance dwindled. The structure gradually deteriorated until the late County Supervisor John Anson Ford obtained funding for capital improvements several decades ago. The Pilgrimage Theatre was then renamed in his honor. It was used intermittently for Shakespearean theater, jazz concerts, and dance performances until former County Supervisor Ed Edelman revived the historic theatre with the creation of the Ford Amphitheatre Season (originally called "Summer Nights at the Ford") in 1993.

In 2000, a \$1.6 million renovation of the entryway to the theatres was undertaken. The new entryway features winding paths that create a more gradual climb from the box office, a waterfall, two dozen species of trees and plants and pocket picnic areas. At the top of the entryway is Edison Plaza, a gathering place where patrons can eat, shop and pick up information.

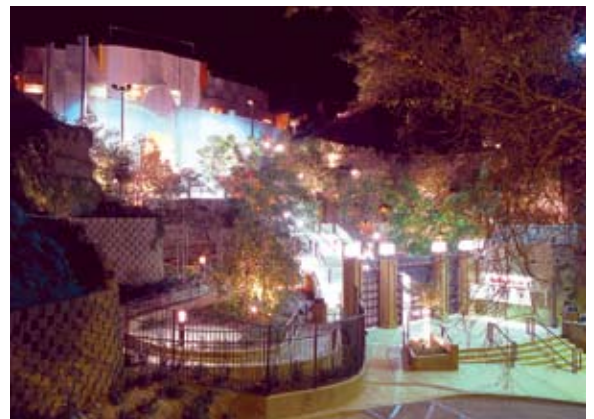
More than \$4.3 million in capital improvements have been made to the stage, backstage, and public areas of the Ford complex since 1995. One of the goals of these renovations was to make the facility completely ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant. These capital investments by the County of Los Angeles continue to bring the historic site up to modern safety, access and performance standards for the enjoyment of all.

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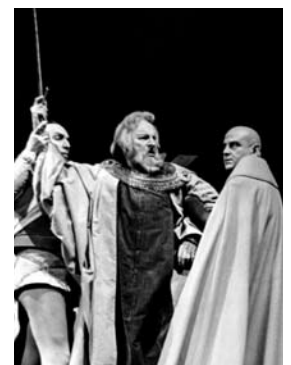
The Ford was built to house Christine Wetherill Stevenson's Pilgrimage Play



The entryway, inaugurated in 2000, is a welcoming space for visitors.



The Ford has an illustrious history of chamber music presentations. Jascha Heifetz, Gregor Piatagorsky and friends played at the theatre frequently in the 1950s and 1960s.



Several different producers have brought Shakespeare to the Ford. Morris Karnovsky played King Lear in a production transferred from UCLA.