



Contact: Davidson & Choy | Tim Choy [t.choy@dcpublicity.com](mailto:t.choy@dcpublicity.com)  
Peter Goldman [p.goldman@dcpublicity.com](mailto:p.goldman@dcpublicity.com) | 213-500-8532

Rachyl Spacca (*she/her*) Chief Marketing & Communications Officer:  
[rspacca@pasadenaplayhouse.org](mailto:rspacca@pasadenaplayhouse.org) | 626-792-8672 Ext. 301

# **Pasadena Playhouse Marks 100th Anniversary With Major Building Announcement**

**Historic 1925 Property Returns to Playhouse Ownership  
after More Than Five Decades in Private Hands**

**Major Gifts from Terri and Jerry Kohl and Perenchio Foundation  
Headline \$15M Fundraising Effort**

**Building Purchase Caps Dramatic Turnaround  
for California's Legendary State Theater**

PASADENA, CA (April 6, 2025) — In major news timed to coincide with the 100th anniversary of its historic facility, Pasadena Playhouse announced today that it has successfully purchased its 1925 building, which was lost to bankruptcy in 1970 and held in private ownership for more than five decades. Located at 39 S. El Molino Avenue and anchoring the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District, the 70,000-square-foot campus, which includes the theater, restaurant space, and six-story annex, is one of Southern California's most iconic cultural venues and among the most influential and storied sites in American theater history.

The purchase of the building was funded by a \$15 million fundraising campaign, which has reached 75% of its goal. The lead gift for the effort was provided by the Perenchio Foundation and matched by major arts philanthropists Terri and Jerry Kohl. The campaign's other major donors are The Ahmanson Foundation, The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, Brad and Pamela King, Harmon and Lea Kong, Leigh and Harry Olivar, Jane Kaczmarek, Bingo and Gino Roncelli, and Erin and Jeremy Baker.

"This is an inspiring community moment, and we should all share in the pride and joy of it," said Erin Baker, chair of the Pasadena Playhouse Board of Trustees. "With this purchase, we are committing to revitalizing the powerful original vision of the Playhouse and bringing it to life for a new century. We are deeply grateful for

the bold visionaries who have paved the way for this progress, and we are excited to welcome more of our community to join the effort in making extraordinary theater for everyone!”

Following the transaction, which was completed on April 4, Pasadena Playhouse now owns the entirety of its campus, including the original 1925 theater building and the adjoining six-story annex, known as the Fannie E. Morrison Building, which was built in 1936 to house the renowned College of Theatre Arts. The property also includes the intimate Carrie Hamilton Theater, which was dedicated in memory of Carol Burnett’s late daughter in 2006, and the first-floor restaurant space, which was most recently home to Bar Chelou. With the facility returned to Playhouse ownership, opportunities abound to enhance, restore, and reimagine the space for the 21st century. The historic building will turn 100 on May 18, 2025.

“For most of our history, we’ve been making extraordinary theater here while essentially renting our own home. Today, that changes. Thanks to the generosity of our community, this building is finally back where it belongs—with the people who built it and believe in its future. Owning our historic campus unlocks endless possibilities for what Pasadena Playhouse can be in its second century,” said Producing Artistic Director Danny Feldman.

The purchase of the Playhouse facility caps a remarkable institutional turnaround for the organization. Since taking the helm in 2016, Feldman has overseen a dramatic resurgence in artistic, box office, and fundraising success, highlighted nationally by receipt of the 2023 Regional Theatre Tony Award. In another marker of the theater’s momentum, Feldman first announced news of the building purchase on Saturday night to a sold-out crowd at the Playhouse’s annual gala, which broke the \$1 million mark for the first time.

## **ABOUT PASADENA PLAYHOUSE**

Pasadena Playhouse, the official State Theater of California and recipient of the 2023 Regional Theatre Tony Award, is internationally recognized for its significant role in the development of American theater. One of the most prolific theaters in the country, the Playhouse has staged thousands of original productions since its founding in 1917 including premieres of works by Tennessee Williams, Eugene O’Neill, Suzan-Lori Parks and hundreds more. For decades, its pioneering School for Theater Arts was a training ground for actors and theatermakers who went on to make significant contributions to the entertainment industry. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Danny Feldman since 2016, Pasadena Playhouse’s productions and community programs are centered on its founding idea of being

a living force in its community, making theater for everyone. Today, the Playhouse continues to advance the American theater and serves as a hub for the top theatermakers of our time.

### **ABOUT THE PLAYHOUSE BUILDING**

Pasadena Playhouse, located at 39 South El Molino Avenue in Pasadena, California, was designed in 1924 by renowned architect Elmer Grey (1872-1964). Known for iconic landmarks such as The Beverly Hills Hotel, The Huntington Art Gallery, and Wattles Mansion, Grey crafted the Playhouse in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The theater's interiors were designed by associate architect Dwight Gibbs, who also worked on the Carthay Circle Theatre. Today, the Pasadena Playhouse complex includes the original 643-seat historic theater; additional performance spaces; the six-story Fannie Morrison Building built in 1936 to house the renowned College of Theatre Arts; the intimate Carrie Hamilton Theater which was dedicated in memory of Carol Burnett's late daughter in 2006; and a restaurant space opening onto the historic courtyard. Recognized for its cultural and architectural significance, the Playhouse was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.

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