



**MEDIA ALERT**  
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**May 9, 2018**

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**Vision Theatre  
and  
Manchester Youth Arts Center  
Closed for Final Three Phases of Renovations**

Los Angeles - The historic Vision Theatre and the Manchester Youth Arts Center in Leimert Park has closed for final restorations until 2021. In 2011, the Vision Theatre underwent an \$11 million renovation. Construction on the final three phases has now begun. Updates to the entertainment space include reconfigured seating; an enlarged stage; a fly loft with office spaces; and a build-out at the lower level to include an orchestra pit and other upgrades to enhance theatrical and musical performances.

"The Vision Theatre is a vibrant landmark of the Leimert Park community; I am delighted that we are entering the final phase of its renovation, the improvements to the theatre are long-awaited and ambitious. For years communities like Leimert Park have ensured access to the arts, and the Vision Theatre has served as a place of connection, celebration, and self-discovery. Upon completion, the Vision Theatre will continue to support the community, both artistically and economically," said **Los Angeles City Council President Herb J. Wesson**.

"Leimert Park and the Vision Theatre are incubators of our city's regional artistic community. The neighborhood is considered a centerpiece of the creative and social fabric of African American culture in Los Angeles. It is a place where first dates have turned into marriages, and art, poetry, jazz, and dance have inspired imaginations. When completed, the Vision Theatre will once again serve as a global beacon, celebrating and honoring the cultural contributions of the African American and African Diaspora communities in our city and beyond," said **Danielle Brazell, General Manager of the Department of Cultural Affairs**.



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“The new ‘vision’ for the Vision Theatre is to provide an arts venue for professional arts presentations and productions; a training center for diverse cultural talent reflective of South LA; and the production and presentation of diverse world-class theatrical performances, music, dance, and film festivals – along with a variety of cultural forums, community meetings, and conventions,” **said Ben Johnson, Department of Cultural Affairs Performing Arts Program Director.**

“The newly re-imagined Vision Theatre is designed to be the anchor organization for Leimert Park and the African American and African Diaspora cultural community-at-large,” says Johnson, “a celebration of the performing arts -- dance, music, and theater; and a resource for all Angelenos.”

“Past community collaborations were created specifically to support and provide visibility to the important artists creating work in Los Angeles, and to bring attention to the gap left by the closure of some of the Black theaters in South Los Angeles. Theatres such as Inner City Cultural Center, Marla Gibbs Crossroads Arts Academy, Ebony Showcase Theater, The Performing Arts Society of Los Angeles, Foxx Follies, Frances William Corner Playhouse, Inglewood Playhouse, and the Watts Mafundi Institute,” **said James Burks, Manager of the Vision Theatre.**

The Vision Theatre has steadfastly been committed to telling the stories of the community, for the community, as well as for the broader city-wide theatre-going audience. The Vision Theatre will be closed for renovations until 2021 when it will continue this commitment.

For more information about the Vision Theatre, please call 213.202.5500.

**About DCA’s Historic Vision Theatre**

The Vision Theatre, a large neighborhood movie palace, is a 1931 Spanish Deco wonder that has retained its importance to the community for over 80 years since it first opened as the Leimert Theatre. Built as a showcase theater for premieres, it became a neighborhood movie theater soon after opening and was operated by Fox West Coast Theatres. The theater was later renamed the Watchtower in the 1970s, following its purchase and conversion to a Jehovah’s Witness Kingdom Hall.



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Designed in a classic southern California streamlined Spanish Colonial style, the tall steel frame on top of the lower stucco clad tower originally with the word LEIMERT, was later changed and renamed VISION by Actress Marla Gibbs after purchasing the building in 1990. The theater fell on hard times after the 1992 economic recession which hit this area of Los Angeles.

The City of Los Angeles has since acquired the property and is currently investing funds and resources to fully restore and convert the theater. The Vision Theatre is one of four venues and two partner venues managed by DCA.

**About the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)**

As a leading, progressive arts and cultural agency, DCA empowers Los Angeles' vibrant communities by supporting and providing access to quality visual, literary, musical, performing, and educational arts programming; managing vital cultural centers; preserving historic sites; creating public art; and funding services provided by arts organizations and individual artists.

Formed in 1925, DCA promotes arts and culture as a way to ignite a powerful dialogue, engage LA's residents and visitors, and ensure LA's varied cultures are recognized, acknowledged, and experienced. DCA's mission is to strengthen the quality of life in Los Angeles by stimulating and supporting arts and cultural activities, ensuring public access to the arts for residents and visitors alike.

DCA advances the social and economic impact of arts and culture through grant-making, public art, community arts, and strategic marketing and development. DCA creates and supports arts programming, maximizing relationships with other city agencies, artists, and arts and cultural nonprofit organizations to provide excellent service in neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles.

For more information, please visit [culturela.org](http://culturela.org) or follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/culturela](https://facebook.com/culturela); Instagram @culture\_la; and Twitter @culture\_la.

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