

A.C.T.

american conservatory theater
Carey Perloff, *Artistic Director*
Ellen Richard, *Executive Director*

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Contact: Mayor's Office of Communications | 415-554-6131

Contact: American Conservatory Theater, Kevin Kopjak | 415-296-0677 | kevink@charleszukow.com

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

CENTRAL MARKET GAINS NEW AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER (A.C.T.) PERFORMANCE VENUE

Transformation of Vacant Mid-Market Strand Theater Furthers Development of Arts District & Revitalization

San Francisco, CA—Mayor Edwin M. Lee today announced American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.)'s purchase of the Strand Theater—an historic cinema that has been closed since 2006 – providing another boost to the Central Market area of San Francisco. First opened in 1917, this newly revitalized theater will give A.C.T. a much-needed second space in which to produce and present new work and new artists as part of the rapidly transforming Central Market neighborhood.

“Activating buildings around Central Market and the Tenderloin is key to the overall improvement of the area,” said Mayor Lee. “I’m encouraged by A.C.T.’s purchase of the Strand and see it as an important step in cultivating a unique identity for the neighborhood that will bring new jobs and transform the community.”

A.C.T.’s purchase of the Strand at 1127 Market Street comes on the heels of the company’s opening of a small performance space, The Costume Shop, nearby at 1117 Market Street. The 300-seat Strand will also be home to performances from A.C.T.’s Master of Fine Arts Program students. The Strand will expand the scope of A.C.T. performances, as productions will be staged both at the American Conservatory Theater, A.C.T.’s 1,040-seat mainstage space, and at the Strand’s more intimate proscenium space.

The purchase of the Strand was financed entirely through a gift by A.C.T. Board Member Jeff Ubben and his wife Laurie. “Thanks to the incredible generosity of the Ubbens, A.C.T. is able to increase its capacity as an educational institution and play a vital role in improving one of the City’s most underserved neighborhoods,” said A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff. “Additionally, we see the Strand as an opportunity to not only welcome our current audience base to a new and more intimate theatrical experience, but to also excite and engage the next generation of San Francisco theatergoers.”

Current plans for the Strand include a 300-seat theater, a mixed-use space for classrooms, rehearsals, and cabaret performances, and a small restaurant. A.C.T. is planning to launch a capital campaign later this year to raise the funds needed for the renovation. Renovation will begin in spring of 2013 with a target opening date in late fall of 2014.

The reopening of the Strand as a performance venue is the latest and most ambitious in a string of arts organizations relocation or expansion to Central Market and the Tenderloin. Along with technology companies, arts organizations have been welcomed by the neighborhood through various initiatives of the Mayor's Office aimed at activating vacant buildings and bringing positive activity to residents and visitors alike. In the past year, Burning Man, SF Camerawork Gallery, the Film Commission's film incubator and PianoFight Theater have arrived or signed leases in the area. They join numerous other long-time and recently-established arts venues and a flock of new restaurants such as Dottie's True Blue Café and Pearl's Deluxe Burgers that have joined the Mayor's Central Market Partnership to bring in new jobs, services, retail and arts to the long-struggling area. For information on the Central Market Partnership, go to: www.centralmarketpartnership.org.

About American Conservatory Theater

American Conservatory Theater nurtures the art of live theater through dynamic productions, intensive actor training in its conservatory, and an ongoing engagement with its community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Carey Perloff and Executive Director Ellen Richard, A.C.T. embraces its responsibility to conserve, renew, and reinvent the rich theatrical traditions that are our collective legacy, while exploring new artistic forms and new communities. A commitment to the highest standards informs every aspect of A.C.T.'s creative work. For more information about A.C.T., go to www.act-sf.org.

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