

UC Theatre project gets boost with \$1.3M matching grant

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The push to renovate the UC Theater on University Avenue got a huge boost after a major philanthropist made a \$1.3 million matching grant. Photo: UC Theatre

One of the Bay Area's biggest philanthropists has given a \$1.3 million matching grant to spur completion of the renovation of the [UC Theatre](#) in Berkeley.

[Tad Taube](#), who made his millions in real estate and through his connection to Joseph Koret, a women's clothing manufacturer, announced this week that he will back the \$5.6 million project, scheduled to be completed this fall.

"Music and the arts are gifts that should be accessible to everyone," Taube said in a press release. "David Mayeri and his innovative team at the Berkeley Music Group have developed a contemporary vision for the UC Theatre that will both enrich our community and broaden youth engagement in the arts. Supporting this project presents an opportunity for our community to engage in an endeavor that will have a broad, diverse impact on music, culture, education and quality of life in our community."

The matching grant means every time someone donates a dollar to [the UC Theatre](#), Taube will match it.

“We are sincerely grateful for this generous partnership with Taube Philanthropies and for Tad’s challenge to the community to match his support,” Mayeri, said in the release. “We look forward to meeting this challenge as others join us to ‘Turn on the Lights’ at The UC Theatre.”

Work on the building at 2036 University Ave. began in March, even though Mayeri had not completed fundraising for the project. When it is finished, the auditorium will have 1,400 seats on tiers, a state-of-the-art Meyer sound system, and a full-service restaurant and bar.

Mayeri, who formed a non-profit to renovate the old theater, plans to book 75 to 100 rock-and-roll shows a year, as well as groups like the Berkeley Symphony. There will be lectures, as well as time slots for school or amateur groups to use the space.

Mayeri has also launched an apprenticeship program to teach teens and young adults about the concert business.

Mayeri, the former chief operating officer of BGP, the successful concert company started by Bill Graham, has been working on the UC Theatre project for eight years. He got city approval to refurbish the landmarked theater in 2009, but the economic slowdown made it difficult to raise all the funds at that time.

[Taube Philanthropies](#) supports arts, education, civic, and Jewish cultural initiatives across the Bay Area, including the San Francisco Opera, the Contemporary Jewish Museum, the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, and various university-level programs and departments.

Taube did another successful matching contribution last year, which led him to try to motivate additional community involvement via a matching grant structure. Taube pledged \$2 million to keep the Bay Lights installation on the Bay Bridge shining, according to the press release.

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