

Closed for 12 years, Berkeley's historic UC Theatre to reopen as live music venue

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BERKELEY - Berkeley's historic UC Theatre will reopen as a nonprofit live music venue next year, organizers said.

The 1,460-seat theater on University Avenue, which has been closed for 12 years, will undergo renovations starting this summer before reopening as a year-round live music venue managed by the nonprofit Berkeley Music Group, the group said Wednesday.

Leaders of the nonprofit, who include board president David Mayeri, say the venue will present around 75 to 100 shows a year and will be the only venue of its size and type in the East Bay.

Mayor Tom Bates hailed the planned reopening as a major economic boost for Berkeley's downtown.

"The reopening of the UC Theatre as a music and live entertainment venue in the heart of downtown Berkeley is a key milestone in downtown's ongoing revitalization," Bates said.

The Berkeley Music Group has raised \$2.7 million so far toward the theater's revitalization, more than half of its goal of \$5.2 million.

The UC Theatre, which is named after the University of California at Berkeley but not associated with it, first opened in 1917, group officials said.

Known to many as a repertory theater, the UC Theatre held a long-running series of "Rocky Horror Picture Show" screenings and hosted events, including one where filmmaker Werner Herzog ate his shoe on a dare from fellow filmmaker Errol Morris.

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