UC Theatre gets $1.3M grant

Taube charity will help 1917 venue reopen in the fall

By Tom Lochner

BERKELEY — The UC Theatre will reopen in the fall as a live venue for music with a focus on youth education programs, helped by a $1.3 million matching grant from Taube Philanthropies.

The landmark building, which opened in 1917 as a first-run movie theater, will be run by the nonprofit Berkeley Music Group and will be renamed the Taube Family Music Hall at UC Theatre, according to a news release from the UC Theater News. The lobby will be named for Shana Penn, executive director of Taube Philanthropies.

The project of restoring and renovating the UC Theatre is expected to cost $5.6 million.

A digital rendering envisions the new UC Theatre as a live music venue with a capacity of 1,400 people.

Taube Philanthropies supports arts, education, civic and Jewish cultural initiatives across the Bay Area, according to the news release.

Its beneficiaries include the San Francisco Opera, the Contemporary Jewish Museum, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and various university programs. The organization also provided a $2 million matching grant last year to support the Bay Lights sculpture on the Bay Bridge.

Berkeley Music Group is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization formed to renovate and manage the UC Theatre, with a mission to advance the understanding and appreciation of music, culture and education in the East Bay, according to the news release.

When completed, the new UC Theatre will become a multitiered music venue for all ages and a variety of musical genres with a capacity of 1,400 people. It will be equipped with a state-of-the-art Meyer Sound system and theatrical lighting and a restaurant and bar, according to the news release.

Its core programming will include rock, indie, jazz, R&B, alternative and world music, with additional programming such as comedy shows, film and a speaker series as well as symphony concerts, opera recitals, and choral and gospel performances, according to the news release.

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