

## **Mandell Weiss gift to create major new theatre at UCSD**

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### MANDELL WEISS GIFT CREATES NEW THEATRE AT UCSD

Due to a \$1.2 million gift from Mandell Weiss to the University of California, San Diego, a major new theatre to be known as the Mandell Weiss Forum will be built on the UCSD campus.

UCSD will contribute \$3.6 million to complete the funding for the \$4.8 million Forum project, which was recently approved by the University of California Board of Regents.

Nationally prominent architect Antoine Predock has been chosen to design the Mandell Weiss Forum, with construction expected to start by the end of March 1989, and completion slated for May 1990.

Weiss' previous donation of \$1.14 million led to the construction of the Mandell Weiss Center for the Performing Arts on the UCSD campus. He has also made significant contributions to the UCSD Department of Theatre, in support of its nationally ranked theatre training program, and to the La Jolla Playhouse.

Weiss said of his most recent donation, "Although the theatre will directly benefit UCSD and the La Jolla Playhouse, it is also a gift to the San Diego community, to expand the opportunities for outstanding theatre productions for which San Diego is gaining a national reputation.

"It will also help make the professional theatre training program at UCSD one of the strongest in the country, built on the strength of its faculty, the state-of-the-art facilities available to it and its affiliation with the La Jolla Playhouse's outstanding professional theatre company."

The new Forum theatre will be located 300 feet north of the Weiss Center, primarily situated in what is now a parking lot servicing the theatre and the Humanities/Undergraduate Library Building on UCSD's Revelle campus.

Once the Forum is completed the Mandell Weiss Center will be renamed the Mandell Weiss Theatre.

The name Mandell Weiss Center will then be applied to an arts complex formed by these two theatres, a new studio theatre which will also house administrative offices for the La Jolla Playhouse, and a classroom/office building for the Department of Theatre.

The three Center theatres will be shared by the UCSD Department of Theatre for student training and productions and by the La Jolla Playhouse, in residence at the Center, to expand its theatre festival season.

The UCSD faculty includes some of the country's leading stage designers, playwrights and actors, who work with students plus work on productions on Broadway, in major venues across the country and in Europe.

For example, UCSD's design program is headed by internationally known theatre designer Robert Israel, winner in the past two years of five major honors, including the most prestigious design award in the United States, the Joseph Maharam Foundation Award. Similarly, students in UCSD's Professional Theatre Training Program, which is the most selective graduate program at UCSD, regularly win top honors in national competitions.

This factor, the program's affiliation with the La Jolla Playhouse's nationally acclaimed professional theatre company, plus its ability to work in state-of-the-art theatres have gained it recognition as a national force in professional theatre training.

The 400-seat Mandell Weiss Forum will have a thrust stage and curved rows of seats wrapping around it. Two rehearsal studios, dressing rooms, storage areas and a courtyard are also included in the Forum's design.

One of the most striking exterior features of the Weiss Forum will be a long wall of reflective glass which theatergoers will pass through as they approach the theatre. Patrons will enter the Forum via a covered ramp running up the inside face of the glass wall, leading to the interior lobby on the second floor of the building. From this entrance, audiences will have a panoramic view of the theatre.

Predock is nationally known for designing buildings which complement the climate, terrain, materials and patterns of design indigenous to a region. For this project he will work with Cleo Architecture and Design, Inc. of San Diego.

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