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# THEATRE 40 FACT SHEET

Beverly Hills theatre company | Founded 1964

AT A GLANCE

Theatre 40 is a membership-based theatre company in Beverly Hills, California. Founded in 1964 by actors gathering to read Shakespeare, the company has grown into an award-winning producer of classics, American plays, world and Los Angeles premieres, and work developed by its own members.

| 1964 | 6+ | 1995 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Founded | Full productions annually | Margaret Harford Award | Venue renamed |

## Organization

**NAME** Theatre Forty, commonly styled Theatre 40

**HOME** Mary Levin Cutler Theatre, 241 South Moreno Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90212

**MAILING ADDRESS** P.O. Box 5401, Beverly Hills, California 90210

**BOX OFFICE** 310-364-0535

**WEBSITE** theatre40.org

**ARTISTIC LEADERSHIP** David Hunt Stafford, Artistic and Managing Director

**COMPANY MODEL** Membership company including Equity, SAG-AFTRA, and non-union actors

## Origins and milestones

**1964** Actors gathered at Susan French's home at 40 Haldeman Road in Santa Monica Canyon to read Shakespeare. The address inspired the company name.

**1965** The group, led by Susan French and John Houlton, moved from readings to production. Its first production was Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale.

**1966** Theatre 40 presented Twelfth Night and The Merchant of Venice in MacArthur Park, described in the handbook as Los Angeles' first Shakespeare in the park.

**1969** The company deepened its relationship with the Beverly Hills Unified School District through a theatre-appreciation course for adult education.

**1974** Beverly Hills High School offered Theatre 40 a storeroom to convert into a permanent theatre. Company labor and support from public and philanthropic partners made the venue possible.

THE COMPANY TODAY

## Programming and participation

- At least six full productions each year.
- A repertoire spanning classic and contemporary works, American classics, world premieres, Los Angeles premieres, and plays by company members.
- Monday Night Seminars: staged readings presented during the school year in coordination with Beverly Hills adult education, typically followed by audience discussion.
- Additional main-stage readings and theatrical events on dark nights.
- A membership-first casting tradition, with company actors receiving priority consideration and a stated commitment to color-conscious, inclusive casting whenever the work permits.
- A volunteer-centered company culture in which members support productions through performance, ushering, audience service, marketing, backstage work, readings, and theatre operations.

## The Mary Levin Cutler Theatre

The company's Beverly Hills home was created from an empty Beverly Hills High School storeroom through grants from the City of Beverly Hills, the Beverly Hills Unified School District, and the Ahmanson Foundation, together with extensive work by Theatre 40 members. The theatre was designed by acclaimed Broadway designer Ming Cho Lee.

Originally named for Reuben Cordova, a longtime supporter and former Beverly Hills school district administrator, the venue was renamed the Mary Levin Cutler Theatre in 2022 in recognition of philanthropist, music educator, ethnomusicology lecturer, and arts advocate Mary Levin Cutler.

## Recognition

Theatre 40 received the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle's Margaret Harford Small Theatre Award in 1995 for continuing excellence and has earned hundreds of honors for main-stage and member-driven work.

In 2026, Stage Raw conferred a Distinguished Production Award on An Inspector Calls and a Lifetime Achievement Award on Artistic and Managing Director David Hunt Stafford.

PRESS-READY DESCRIPTION

*Founded in 1964, Theatre 40 is an award-winning Beverly Hills membership company presenting classics, contemporary works, premieres, readings, and member-developed theatre at the Mary Levin Cutler Theatre.*

## Public contact

**WEBSITE** https://theatre40.org/

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**SOURCE** *Theatre 40 Handbook, April 12, 2026.*