

# *Historic Hemet Theatre*

**PRESS RELEASE – June 21, 2019**

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## **THE BEST KEPT SECRET IN HEMET IS OUT**

Word is spreading that the hottest new music venue in the Inland Empire is tucked away in little old Hemet. Built in 1921, the Historic Hemet Theatre is one of the oldest movie houses in the country. For decades the theatre was a vibrant center of the community, but multiplexes and home entertainment options have taken their toll on small theaters. In 2010, after a fire destroyed the storefronts in the adjacent building, the doors were closed on the Historic Hemet Theatre and it looked like the venue would be lost along with so many other historic theatres.

But a group of dedicated volunteers had a vision that the charming old movie house could be reinvented into a community arts center, hosting concerts, vintage movies and a variety of educational events. The Historic Hemet Theatre Foundation took over operation of the facility in 2013, creating a "Tribute Mania" concert series that has attracted fans from across Southern California... and beyond. In March 2018, the Foundation completed the purchase of the property and has begun plans for a multi-million dollar renovation.

The transformation started with plaster and paint in the lobby, using old photos to replicate an art deco flair from the 1930's. New carpet and concession equipment were added earlier this year. Custom chandeliers are being fabricated to complete the look. In the auditorium, projection, sound and lighting equipment have been updated. Elegant plush seats, donated by the Goldenson Theatre in North Hollywood, have been installed, with the removed seats being sold to supplement the Building Fund. One set of 36 seats were shipped to Takamatsu, Japan as part of a classic movie house created by renowned artist Yoichiro Yoda.

Future improvements include enlarged restrooms with handicap access and improved green room facilities for performers. Eventually, the front of the building will include a reproduction of the building's pointed marquee from the 1940's with classic neon lights. The upper level of the building will house a Museum of Early Film, dedicated to the theatre's original owner, William Martin. Funds for the renovations are being raised from a combination of donations, program sponsors, grants, and fundraisers.

Already the Foundation has hosted more than 50,000 patrons. Fans are discovering that inside that plain little building in the middle of town is a charming art deco auditorium with wonderful acoustics, a series featuring great tribute bands and a big dance floor at the foot of the stage. And bands are discovering the enthusiasm of the Hemet audiences -- cheering, clapping and dancing more than anywhere else they perform.

Both of the local chambers of commerce have presented HHT with prestigious awards and Inland Empire Magazine named it "Best Live Theater Venue."

The Foundation is a 501(c)3 charity, operating with a staff of over 100 volunteers. The Foundation is dedicated to improving the quality of life in the community with three key impacts: 1) historic preservation of the Historic Hemet Theatre (one of the oldest in the nation); 2) cultural enrichment through performing arts and educational programming; and 3) economic

revitalization of Hemet's historic downtown district. Leading the team is CEO Susan Carrier, handling the corporate administration, and her husband Bryan Carrier who provides the facility management and selects the programming. Susan and Bryan are passionate about the difference the old movie house is making in the community. "We are helping to breathe new life into downtown Hemet, spreading the word that there are exciting things happening here."

Upcoming concerts include tributes to Led Zeppelin (July 6), Tim McGraw (July 12), Aerosmith (July 20), REO Speedwagon (August 3), Tom Petty (August 17), and the Young Guns Tribute to the Superstars of Country Music (August 23). The concert schedule for the remainder of the year is scheduled to be released in early July.

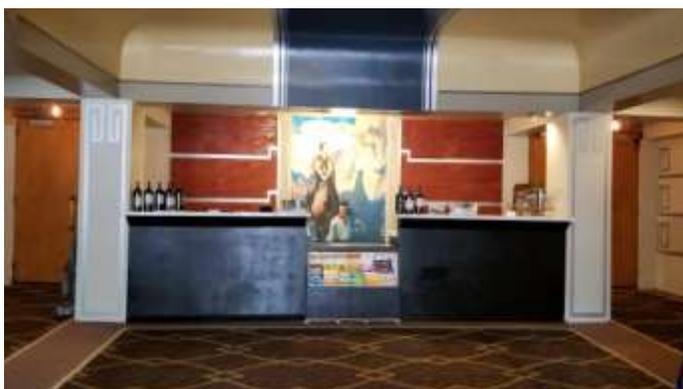
Showtime for all concerts is 7:00 pm, with doors open at 6:15 pm. Tickets are \$22 presale / \$25 day of show. Information on all theatre events is available at [www.HistoricHemetTheatre.com](http://www.HistoricHemetTheatre.com) or by calling the ticket office, (951) 658-5950. A weekly email blast of upcoming events is available by enrolling on the website.



lobby  
circa 1930



lobby  
2013



lobby  
2019



marquee  
circa 1939



marquee  
2019



future marquee



auditorium  
2013



auditorium with new seats  
2016



HHT seats in the  
Island Theatre Megi  
Takamatsu, Japan  
Artist Yoichiro Yoda