



2021

Annual Report

Prepared by
Jay Henslee, Board President



BY THE NUMBERS

SDPAL established in 1983

35 years of ArtsTix in Horton Plaza Park

17,000 ArtsTix subscribers

60 SDPAL member organizations

6 years of San Diego Theatre Week

Over 1 million tickets sold through ArtsTix

50 Theatre Alliance Members

200 Cast & Crew Members



Dear SDPAL Members,

Welcome to the San Diego Performing Arts League annual report. For nearly 40 years, SDPAL has supported the performing arts community in San Diego through a number of programs and resources. What began in 1983 as the League of San Diego Theatres has continued to evolve, and we are here to continue the legacy of supporting our world class arts scene with exciting, new programs.

In February of 2020, as we ended another successful year of San Diego Theatre Week, no one could predict that less than one month later, our stages would go dark. SDPAL quickly transitioned our focus to fundraising and support, generating thousands in donations for our members. We advertised virtual performances in our weekly emails, and transitioned San Diego Theatre Week to a primarily virtual format in May of 2021. Theatre Alliance was established in 2020 and brought new energy to the arts community through collaboration, education and mentorship. The All Cities auditions transitioned to a virtual format in 2020, while still providing valuable exposure for San Diego artists to secure job opportunities in theatre, TV and commercials.

As we reflect on the incredible support and collaboration of our arts community, we also look to the future and what's next for SDPAL. This year, we begin work on our strategic plan, mapping out new programming and more ways to provide even greater support for the performing arts community. We're also examining how we promote diversity, equity and inclusion – not just within our organization, but through mentorship and education.

Our annual report focuses on three of our core components; marketing, collaboration and opportunity. We hope you'll enjoy our summary of impact in these areas throughout the past year.

We are immensely grateful to everyone who makes our work possible; our members, our board and staff, and the community. Thank you for your support of SDPAL and allowing us to continue promoting the arts in San Diego.

**Jacole Kitchen
Executive Director**

**Jay Henslee
Board President**

PROGRAMS



What began in 1986 as a small box office in the lobby of the Spreckels Theater now celebrates 35 years of providing discount tickets and operating as San Diego's only not-for-profit box office. ArtsTix's weekly emails reach a subscriber base of 17,000, and each month, thousands of visitors pass by our iconic ticket center in Horton Plaza Park. We'd love to offer tickets for your next show! Email christian@sdpal.com for details.

Theatre Week began in 2016 as a 10-day celebration of the arts, and in 2021 we transitioned to an entire month. From flower fields to Liberty Station, and the comfort of their own homes, audiences experienced live performances through a unique lens with special pricing and promotional opportunities. Each year, Theatre Week reaches more audience members with TV, radio, print and social media advertising.



THEATRE ALLIANCE



In the spring of 2020, Theatre Alliance was formed to foster support and collaboration between theatres in the wake of the pandemic. This dynamic group brought together new theaters and talent to share skills, resources and philanthropic energy. Theatre Alliance joined the SDPAL family shortly thereafter, allowing even greater support for arts organizations.

When racial injustice impacted our community in May of 2020, Theatre Alliance began a series of powerful roundtable sessions as a platform for open and honest discussion, education and action planning. These compelling monthly discussions focused on influential topics that enabled many theatres to implement action plans around accountability and strategic planning.

CAST & CREW

Originally established as the Actors Alliance, Cast & Crew has supported performing arts professionals for over 30 years. The annual All Cities auditions provide opportunity for performers showcase their talent for casting directors from all facets of media: theatre, tv, commercial and film. In 2020, we shifted the All Cities event to a virtual format and provided workshops with education around auditioning virtually, and headshot and resume building.

Cast & Crew continues to provide year-round education including recent workshops on Storytelling through Song and Financial Literacy for Performing Arts Professionals. Email membership@sdpal.com for inquiries.

Did you know your SDPAL membership includes one free listing in the Performing Arts Directory? Email us to take advantage of this valuable benefit!



"Storytelling Through Song"



"Self Taping Tips"

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35 YEARS OF ARTSTIX



ARTS TIX Turns 10

A San Diego Landmark Celebrates an Anniversary

If you've ever walked by Horton Plaza and wondered what that colorful neon kiosk was all about, you've been missing out on one of the best deals in town on tickets to performing arts events.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the founding of The San Diego Performing Arts League's Times Arts Tix booth. For a decade, ARTS TIX has been selling 1/2 price tickets to San Diego's music, theatre and dance events. And if you think Tony Gwynn's achievement of getting 3,000 hits is big, ARTS TIX is getting ready to sell its 500,000 ticket!

It wasn't always this way. It all started in 1984 when Bill Purves, after finishing 11 years of active duty in the Navy, decided to make his home in San Diego and resume his former career in arts administration and theatrical production.

Bill Purves discovered there was a loosely organized group of San Diego theatres interested in raising the visibility of theatre in San Diego. Armed with extensive theatre experience, acquired while in the MFA program at the Yale School of Drama and with his savvy in organizing groups, Purves got to work.

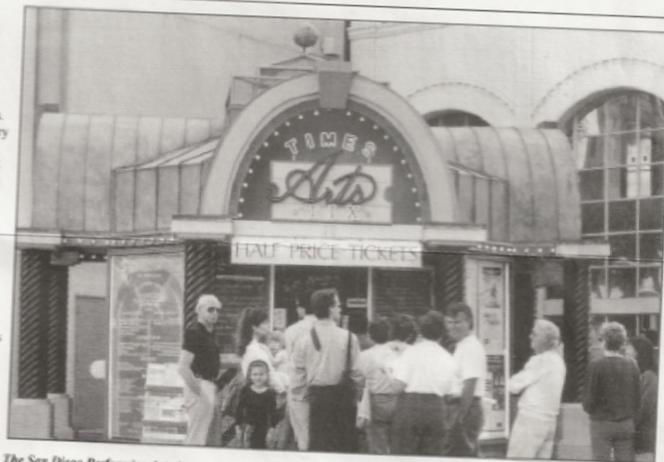
After an exhaustive nationwide research effort, Purves, a volunteer, discovered that in every major city with an organized performance arts community, there is a mechanism to sell half price tickets on the day of the performance to all productions and full price advance performance tickets.

He learned that each ticket sales sites is run by an organization of theatres, and is in the middle of a high volume foot traffic area such as Times Square in New York where the first Times Square TK5 Booth achieved instantaneous success 25 years ago.

Inspired by the New York success, other major cities soon followed suit. Among them Boston and Chicago emerged to become highly successful.

In 1984 in San Diego, there was a great deal of interest in revitalizing downtown (sound familiar?) with plans to renovate the historical Gaslamp Quarter. At the same time interest in San Diego theatre was booming. Spearheaded by Purves, the San Diego Performing Arts League was formed and the next several years were spent assembling a Board of Trustees and raising money.

Finally, in 1986 the organization was strong enough to make its first move. Purves, as the League's first president, had been following Alan Ziter's success in heading the Chicago's HOT TIX operation. He wrote to Ziter inviting him to come to San Diego. "To a great adventure with a thirty day escape clause". Ziter took the challenge and left a freezing Chicago to visit sunny San Diego during a warm December El Nino. Thirteen years later he is



The San Diego Performing Arts League's Times Arts Tix booth

still here. Three months after Ziter's arrival the League's first ticket booth opened in the box office of the Spreckels Theater for what was supposed to be three months. Jacquelyn Littlefield, owner of the Spreckels Theatre and the Spreckels Building generously allowed the League to remain there until they got their own location.

Three months turned into three years, but finally the League had raised enough money to take the next step.

By 1989 Horton Plaza had become the hub of the city's revitalized downtown. The Hahn Company (Horton Plaza developers) donated the current site in Horton Plaza for the ticket booth. "We wanted a highly visible location that would put a face on San Diego Theatre downtown. We needed that visible presence," explained Purves.

Behind the Hahn Company request was the wisdom of the late Ernest W. Hahn, Chairman of the Hahn Company, a great benefactor of the arts who realized what the arts did to revitalize the centers of American cities.

The Los Angeles Times, who in 1989 had a special San Diego edition, made a large grant for the new Horton Plaza Kiosk which was named the Times Arts Tix booth. Other large donors included the National Endowment for the Arts, the Parker Foundation, the Copley Foundation, Las Patronas, the San Diego Community Foundation, and Mervyns.

When the booth first opened in 1989, the Performing Arts League had 21 members and processed tickets on hand written vouchers. Today everything is computerized for the League's 130 members. To date they have sold 489,500 tickets and returned 7.8 million dollars to its members.

Bill Purves notes that the League "has become a beacon for the arts in San Diego, which is exactly what we wanted it to do".

The success of ARTS-TIX and the revenue it generates allows the League to produce other programs, which they have developed over the years.

Several successful programs followed including What's Playing on Stage in San Diego, a printed performing arts guide, Bargain Arts Day, one day a year when patrons pay what they can for tickets (sponsored by Wells Fargo) Family Theatre Days, where kids-go-free with an adult purchase, (sponsored by Target) an all-inclusive web site at www.sandiegoperforms.com and a new awareness campaign for all of San Diego's performing arts.

Today politicians, professional people and business leaders in San Diego recognize and continue to assist The San Diego Performance Arts League's efforts to help build a stronger society in which the arts are a vital part.

And San Diego residents and visitors can continue to enjoy the thrill of live performances. As Alan Ziter is known to say, "In San Diego, when the sun goes down, the curtain goes up!"