

## AREN'T WE LUCKY?

We Angelenos can hardly believe it's true! In April two beautiful new theatres are opening in our Civic Center for live stage performances.

The Ahmanson is the larger with a seating capacity of 2,100. Its proscenium stage is similar to the one in Hawthorne's auditorium. The second is the Mark Taper Forum, so different from any theatre in the world that the builders won't allow the managers and directors to take a peek at it before it is finished! But our PTA spies have found out some of the secrets!

The Mark Taper Forum is an actor's dream-theatre! It has only 14 rows with 750 seats so that actors can use their natural voices for more realistic portrayals. No, it's not theatre-in-the-round--it will have the new "thrust" stage with audience on three rounded sides. Actors will be able to turn their backs without cheating any Xdy, yet they will have the close, direct feeling of theatre-in-the-round, something like Shakespeare's "apron" stage. Also, actors will not have to scurry through the aisles for entrances and exits.

The back wall, a rounded concrete cyclorama, can be either lit up or used for television or movie effects. Ten feet in front of this wall is a marvelous metal screen which will open, close, or disappear in parts. The floor will open, close, overlap, or move about electrically. Scenery (not much will be needed) will never screw into the floor, but descend from the loft above, changing scenes almost as quickly as a movie.

As you can imagine, many of the plays will be experimental. The first presentation, still a secret, will be a world premiere of an original play, specially written for our theatre. Two other originals will follow: *Frederick*, by M. Linney, and *The Witnesses*. The hit musical, *Man of La Mancha*, will be performed by our Civic Light Opera for the grand opening of the Ahmanson Theatre. Tickets will be sold on subscription.

Anyone interested in acting or working at the Mark Taper Forum, professional or not, can be auditioned for the resident company. It will be truly our own Los Angeles Theatre. Actors will be paid regular salaries according to Equity rules. Students will have lower-priced tickets, and the Performing Arts Council is planning projects for boys and girls who want to learn more about the theatre arts. We'll have more details in a later issue of *Hawthorne Headlines*.

In a sense, the happiest part is that we won't pay more taxes for these new theatres because private individuals have paid for them. Mr. Taper contributed most of the cost for constructing the Forum and Mr. Ahmanson, for the theatre named for him. Mr. Lew Wasserman organized many contributions toward financing these theatres, which were designed and built by Mr. Welton Beckett. Return for the investments of these citizens will be the delight, the stimulation, the wonder of their audiences seeing fresh new and old plays with live actors. Aren't we lucky to live in Los Angeles?

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