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Broadway's Historic Globe Theatre Marquee Shines Once More

Iconic three-dimensional globe spins and neon lights shine again for the first time since 1980s, marking a major milestone in the theater's rebirth and another example of the momentum on Broadway

LOS ANGELES (June 24, 2014) –Councilmember José Huizar joined Erik Chol, the new operator of the Globe Theatre, along with the Los Angeles Conservancy, Historic Theatre Foundation and Historic Core Business Improvement District to celebrate the official relighting of the historic Globe Theatre marquee on Broadway in Downtown.

The theater's neon marquee and iconic three-dimensional spinning globe have been fully restored and will be operational for the first time since the 1980s – brought back to life as part of Councilmember José Huizar's Bringing Back Broadway initiative.

"It is Los Angeles' Broadway that is home to the most historic theaters on any street in the nation," said Councilmember Huizar. "One at a time, we are seeing these amazing historic gems brought back to life on Broadway and we look forward to continuing this momentum up and down the storied corridor. I want to thank Erik Chol for his investment and for believing it is never too late to turn something that seemed forgotten by time into something beautiful once again."

A crowd of Downtowners – from residents to property owners, business and civic leaders, gathered to celebrate the Bringing Back Broadway milestone as neon lights on the restored marquee lit up providing a bright glow against the summer sky just as dusk was setting in. Informal performances and exhibits by musicians, singers and artists followed inside after the marquee re-lighting.

The Globe Theatre will open later this year as a regularly programmed live performance venue.

"The Globe Theatre has an incredible history on Broadway and we are proud to be part of the Bringing Back Broadway story that is building on that history and re-energizing this street for the next generation of Broadway visitors," said Erik Chol, new operator of the Globe Theatre and the investor behind its multi-million dollar comeback.

"We are looking forward to the day very soon when we can once again open the doors to this wonderful theater and offer live entertainment for the people of Downtown and all of Los Angeles to enjoy."

The Globe's marquee restoration was a long and complicated process. A tremendous amount of research was done to compile photographs of the various looks the marquee has had over the last 100 years. A collaboration between the theater team, the City's Office of Historic Resources, and the non-profit Los Angeles Historic Theatre Foundation helped find the right balance for the restoration. Once design was settled, the marquee's infrastructure remained a challenge.

Electrical systems were antiquated and in complete disarray and the spinning globe was entirely non-operational. Erik Chol took personal pride in making sure the spinning globe would be brought back, taking pains to commission the right motor and belt needed to make the long-dormant globe spin once again.

"It is a joy to see this iconic globe spin again," said Bill Givens, president of the Los Angeles Historic Theatre Foundation. "One key to a lively entertainment district is lights and more lights. Tonight the Globe Marquee joins others that have brought light and life to Broadway, with others still to come. We commend both Erik Chol for this magnificent restoration, and Councilmember Huizar for the Bringing Back Broadway initiative that promises so much for downtown's entertainment district."

Interior and exterior renovation of the historic theater, built in 1913, is ongoing. When re-opened later this year, the Globe Theatre will feature restored Baroque sculptures and decorative elements, an original marble staircase and mosaic and a restored historic ticket booth. The theater's original entrance from Broadway is also getting reactivated, after having been walled in and covered for decades. Additionally, the theater will have state-of-the-art light and sound systems, fully modern air conditioning and heating, as well as all new electrical and plumbing infrastructure.

"This restored marquee is quite literally a sign of the great progress we're seeing on Broadway," said Linda Dishman, executive director of the Los Angeles Conservancy. "It is so exciting to see these beautiful theater marquees come back to life, one by one. We're well on our way to returning Broadway to its original and rightful place as a vibrant, world-class commercial and entertainment district."

Opened in 1913 by Oliver Morosco, this theater was conceived not as a vaudeville house or nickelodeon, but as an elegant dramatic playhouse – the first legitimate playhouse on Broadway. The Morosco, like most 20th century theaters, has had a number of name changes through its more than a century of existence.

These include the Morosco (for the first two decades), the President (during the 1930s), the Newsreel (during the 1940s, before that name was transferred to the Tower Theatre) and, finally, the Globe. During the Great Depression, newsreels took over, lasting throughout WWII. In 1958, a Mexican wax museum opened in the basement to accompany the Spanish-language programming upstairs. In 1987, concrete was used to level the floor from the lobby to the stage, so that a permanent indoor swap meet could be installed in the historic space. The most recent use was a night club under different management that closed several years ago.

Chol wants the Globe to be an integral part of the Downtown scene, and to support the revitalization occurring in the historic core. He wanted to work with people who are similarly invested in and passionate about Downtown.

With this in mind Chol built much of his project team with Downtown firms: Oneone77 Creative Studio handled the marquee restoration; Karin Liljegren's Omgivning leads project architecture; Elizabeth Peterson Group represents the project for land use and entitlements. Additionally, Los Angeles-based R. Knoll is tasked with interior design, and New Theme is serving as general contractor. Chol's wife Florence has even taken paint to brush to benefit the effort, with the painstaking repair in the theater's balconies, and Chol himself spent many early morning hours scraping and sanding away the countless layers of paint that had built up on the marquee over the decades.

About Bringing Back Broadway

Bringing Back Broadway is a public-private partnership – an ambitious 10-year plan led by Councilmember Huizar to revitalize the Historic Broadway corridor in Downtown L.A. Goals are to provide economic development and business assistance, reactivate Broadway's historic vacant theaters, as well as more than one million square feet of vacant commercial space and increase parking and transit options, including bringing the beloved streetcar back to downtown Los Angeles.

The **Broadway Streetscape Master Plan** is one of L.A.'s first large-scale "Road Diets." Through the plan's Phase I "Dress Rehearsal," traffic lanes are currently being reconfigured and consolidated to one lane southbound and two lanes northbound. New plaza spaces will offer expanded pedestrian areas for gathering, outdoor dining and public activities.

Besides a host of new businesses opening up on Broadway, other Bringing Back Broadway milestones include:

- Recently announced new Historic Commercial Reuse Guidelines, a pilot project for revitalizing many of the historic buildings that line Broadway – a five-year effort championed by Huizar working with multiple city agencies to streamline, adapt and interpret historic guidelines to spur development.
- The **Broadway Entertainment District Design** Guidelines have been in place for several years and guide development on the street.
- The **Broadway Sign District** has begun public review.
- The City has selected a Project Manager for the **Downtown L.A. Streetcar** and the project is currently in its environmental review.
- \$750,000 in facade lighting grants for historic properties along Broadway awarded to 13 historic properties along Broadway.