

CALIFORNIA

# HEAVYTRA

PECHANGA ARENA SAN

3500

San Diego's Pechanga Arena added a new \$500,000 sound system in 2018.

## FFIC



FROM NORTH TO SOUTH,  
STRONG ATTENDANCE  
DRIVES GREAT YEAR FOR  
MANY FACILITIES

IT WAS A golden year for live entertainment in the Golden State with venues across California reporting robust sales and gangbuster gates in 2018. In fact, some facilities in their golden years topped the charts, showing that older arenas with a few upgrades have still “got it.”

Wildfires made somber headlines around the world: November’s Camp Fire was the deadliest in the state’s history. The resulting smoke affected events and activities in Sacramento and the Bay Area.

The holidays and the new year brought some massive storms, but veteran venue executives said that didn’t dampen enthusiasm among fans in a record-setting year for many facilities. In fact, some of these operators said it was as good a year as they could remember, citing a healthy broader economy, facility improvements and additions that increased revenue, plus a deep roster of touring acts with wide appeal.

The new year kicked off in style as the state hosted the College Football Playoff National Championship game and Elton John headlined an early slate that some say will help generate an even bigger year for the business than last year. — *Robert Gray*



## THE CIRCUIT

## CALIFORNIA VENUE MANAGERS TELL WHY IT WAS A BUSY YEAR AT THEIR FACILITIES

**THE FORUM, INGLEWOOD**  
**Rick Merrill, vice president of arena operations****How did you do in 2018?**

It marked the 50th anniversary of the Forum, and

it was a successful year. It was the Forum's best year since reopening (in January 2014). This year looks to be as good or even better.

**Big shows**

We had several artists play multiple nights: The Eagles, Drake, Travis Scott, Fleetwood Mac, U2, Childish Gambino.

**Changes**

Sponsorship: We transitioned from Coke to Pepsi and renewed our Toyota partnership and we're working on new ideas with them. We welcomed Hilton to the family and did a summer mobile tour with Chase and Coolhaus (ice cream). We continue to encourage fans to arrive early with upgraded exterior space with big-screen TVs, improvement



Oakland's Paramount Theatre opened in 1931; The Forum in Inglewood (below) marked its 50th anniversary in 2018.

to sound and ambient lighting, photo ops, preshow games and festive flooring.

**What went right**

UFC was moved to the Forum and we only had a few days to sort out the details. It was a great experience to see the staff make it happen over many hours between Christmas and New Year's to make it successful. We had that week off and people literally had left town and scrambled to come back and make it a big success.

**What went wrong**

My biggest frustration is getting people in and out of there.

**PARAMOUNT THEATRE, OAKLAND**  
**Leslee Stewart, general manager****How did you do in 2018?**

We're quite pleased. It was a healthy year. We always want

more, but we're very pleased. Things are strong, the economy is strong, people are looking to enjoy themselves with music and we see it through ticket sales.

**Big shows**

Christina Aguilera, she was a highlight in October. It was a Monday night; the place was packed.

She is a consummate performer. Typically, people see her in the arena; to see her in this type of intimate venue, people just loved that. For an entertainer of that caliber in a smaller venue, people are just thrilled with it. Anita Baker was fabulous. We did the Hip Hop Nutcracker for the first time and it was close to sold out.

**Changes**

No (physical) changes whatsoever to the National Historical Landmark theater (opened in 1931). We've gotten into doing Hispanic entertainment, music. It's been so well-received by the community, that has been a bonus for us. We're doing more podcasts.

**What went right**

Having some really great shows, good entertainment, great promoters to work with. A good economy, a fabulous art deco building and a great staff. All those things put together make for an experience that our guests are looking for.

**What went wrong**

We had a few shows that canceled.

**LEVI'S STADIUM, SANTA CLARA****Jim Mercurio, vice president of stadium operations and general****manager****How did you do in 2018?**

It was busy, especially the last 60 to 90 days. We ran over 30 events in the month of December alone — holiday parties, company gatherings — and had six football games in 39 days, including the Pac-12 Championship Game, three San Francisco 49ers games, the Redbox Bowl and the College Football (Playoff) National Championship

CONTINUED ON PAGE 52



# SAN JOSE • SILICON VALLEY



CITY NATIONAL CIVIC  
2850 SEATS



CENTER FOR THE  
PERFORMING ARTS  
2600 SEATS



CALIFORNIA THEATRE  
1120 SEATS



MONTGOMERY THEATER  
470 SEATS

FOUR VENUES IN DOWNTOWN  
SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA. ONE CALL.

JOHN CIULLA  
TEAM SAN JOSE

GENERAL MANAGER  
DIRECTOR OF ENTERTAINMENT

408.792.4195  
JCIULLA@SANJOSE.ORG

JANE GONZALES  
TEAM SAN JOSE

BOOKING MANAGER

408.792.4540  
JGONZALES@SANJOSE.ORG



# THE CIRCUIT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 50

game. We had field changes and weather to contend with, but (the CFP title game) was quite possibly one of the best events we've had at the stadium.

## Big shows

Beyoncé and Taylor Swift; a couple large-scale soccer games, the Mexican national team; and the college football championship.

## Changes

We introduced a brag button for people (to wear) on their birthday or their first time at Levi's and a program called Live GOLD-EN: We asked fans to recognize employees at the stadium that perform at a level deserving of additional recognition. Now it's a badge of honor for these employees to wear these pins.

We introduced premium field seats (for 49ers' games) with the IdentoGo by IDEMIA Green Room that are literally on the field in the end zone — leather recliners, full service, all-inclusive with a personal server.

## What went right

The CFP National Championship. It was such a terrific event. To deal with the challenges that Mother Nature threw our way and 16 months in the planning, that event was phenomenal.

## What went wrong

The biggest issue was proba-

bly dealing with the fatigue of the employees and the weather (featuring high winds, heavy rain, thunder and lightning) 48 to 72 hours before the CFP championship.

**PECHANGA ARENA, SAN DIEGO**  
**Ernie Hahn, senior vice president and general manager**



manager

## How did you do in 2018?

It was an above-average year, the best in at least five years and the second best (box office) in the last 10. We're proud of a 52-year-old building that's the dominant building in San Diego. I thought we were having a good year and it ended up being a great year! We finished strong, plus some costs ended up being lower.

## Big shows

We had a great concert year, highlighted in the end by Andrea Bocelli, who hadn't been in the building in 20 years.

## Changes

We added a \$500,000 JBL sound system into the building this past

year. It's the best system we've ever had and it's noticeable at all games and events, adding a whole next level to the experience. We also added a new scoreboard in the last three years. We try to give people a 2019 experience in a 1966 building.

## What went right

We did a new naming-rights deal with Pechanga Casino and are ecstatic with that deal. There was a lot of red tape because we had to go through the city of San Diego (which owns the facility) and we were able to make it happen in two months. Pechanga has an incredible social media following and their ability to tag us and put us through their channels has been great so far.

## What went wrong

We went from no tenants in the building four or five years ago to four professional teams: hockey, lacrosse, soccer and now (an Indoor Football League) team, so you get to a situation with locker room space and storage that's been a big challenge to make sure everyone's happy.

## How did you do in 2018?

There's been a lot of improvement since SMG (Worldwide) took over the building 2 1/2 years ago. There's been a lot of improvement in content and ticket sales. ... It was a good year. We were so close, just 442 tickets, to being No. 1 (among the state's 10,001-to 15,000-seat venues).

## Big shows

We had Trans-Siberian Orchestra. The production of that show is incredible. It's a massive crew and they have so much talent. We also had Rod Stewart, Pink and Kevin Hart.

## Changes

SMG has poured millions of dollars into the venue over the past 24 months. We built a 10,000-square-foot outdoor patio for preshow parties, with barbecues and bars where guests can enjoy a party before the show starts. That opened in October.

We rebranded and renovated all of our concession stands with new concepts and new digital menu boards. It's like a home makeover show. It's improved our numbers and our menus have improved dramatically and that's helped the guest experience.

## What went right

Our booking efforts paid off, our marketing efforts really paid off.

## What went wrong

We opened up the beautiful patio, but we've had two or three times since we opened in October that we had something planned that we had to cancel or move inside. Weather's never perfect and that has been a challenge and a disappointment. We're over it. 



**CITIZENS BUSINESS BANK ARENA, ONTARIO, CALIF.**  
**Adam Millar, general manager**

Levi's Stadium (above): Andrea Bocelli performs at Pechanga Arena.





# WHERE GRAND & ILLUSTRIOUS TAKE THE STAGE



A treasure of the Los Angeles arts and culture scene for more than 80 years, the historic 3,000-seat Pasadena Civic Auditorium will transform your event with timeless grace. The Pasadena Civic is one of the most revered performance halls in the nation hosting legends such as Michael Jackson, the Supremes, Santana, Louis Armstrong, Stevie Wonder, Morrissey, and Van Halen.



CONTACT MATTHEW HOURIHAN FOR BOOKING INFORMATION AT (626) 584-4262



# TOPSTOPS CALIFORNIA

Ranked by tickets sold. Based on data from concerts and events Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2018, as reported to Pollstar. Data updated as of Jan. 25.

RANK	VENUE	TICKETS SOLD	CAPACITY	GROSS	SHOWS
------	-------	--------------	----------	-------	-------

## MORE THAN 30,000 CAPACITY

1	Rose Bowl, Pasadena	286,955	90,000	\$36,031,637	5
2	Levi's Stadium, Santa Clara	154,785	68,500	\$21,555,170	3
3	Oracle Park, San Francisco	111,222	42,000	\$15,233,256	3
4	Glen Helen Amphitheater, San Bernardino	80,307	65,000	\$3,659,605	5
5	Dodger Stadium, Los Angeles	78,037	56,600	\$6,029,674	2

## 15,001-30,000 CAPACITY

1	Forum, Inglewood	1,127,193	17,500	\$110,067,198	97
2	SAP Center, San Jose	565,605	20,000	\$44,955,968	74
3	Oracle Arena, Oakland	463,250	19,200	\$39,643,196	55
4	Golden 1 Center, Sacramento	436,323	17,500	\$30,391,760	57
5	Shoreline Amphitheatre, Mountain View	397,026	22,000	\$16,384,440	27

## 10,001-15,000 CAPACITY

1	Pechanga Arena, San Diego	273,439	14,000	\$18,597,531	52
2	Citizens Business Bank Arena, Ontario	272,997	12,000	\$16,803,375	49
3	FivePoint Amphitheatre, Irvine	194,323	12,000	\$9,534,690	23
4	Concord Pavilion, Concord	144,711	13,708	\$5,689,310	18
5	Viejas Arena, San Diego	93,325	12,200	\$6,232,444	14

## 5,001-10,000 CAPACITY

1	Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, San Francisco	356,558	8,500	\$19,880,741	47
2	Greek Theatre, Los Angeles	234,186	5,801	\$15,958,466	46
3	Greek Theatre at UC Berkeley	191,282	8,500	\$10,640,018	31
4	Pacific Amphitheatre, Costa Mesa	183,823	8,200	\$9,043,186	33
5	Ironstone Amphitheatre, Murphys	43,650	6,700	\$2,889,018	9

## 2,001-5,000 CAPACITY

1	Fox Theater, Oakland	217,239	2,800	\$10,082,463	92
2	The Masonic, San Francisco	103,287	3,300	\$7,809,004	47
3	Paramount Theatre, Oakland	86,205	3,040	\$7,918,943	40
4	City National Civic, San Jose	81,803	3,322	\$4,701,659	42
5	Cal Coast Credit Union Open Air Theatre, San Diego	50,561	4,635	\$2,258,740	15

## 2,000 OR LESS CAPACITY

1	The Fillmore, San Francisco	92,574	1,150	\$2,735,546	97
2	McCallum Theatre, Palm Desert	86,553	1,127	\$6,689,817	91
3	Humphrey's Concerts By The Bay, San Diego	69,355	1,450	\$4,857,146	59
4	Mary Stuart Rogers Theatre, Modesto	67,855	1,248	\$4,034,633	72
5	Troubadour, West Hollywood	60,033	500	\$1,441,675	153

Note: Capacity shown is legal capacity listed in Pollstar database. Compiled by teamboxoffice@pollstar.com.



♥ GaylanNickle  
#JustinTimberlake

♥ SabrinaWu  
#DragonActIIIMOTTE

♥ GuillermoGuerra  
#ProposalAtTheTank

♥ YBMAHONE  
#Wild949

SharonYee  
#Madonna

♥ CarlosRios  
#Rihanna

SAP Center at San Jose. Northern California's Premiere Sports and Entertainment Venue.

sapcenter.com





## VENUE MILESTONE

# ANAHEIM'S CITY NATIONAL GROVE STILL GROWING AFTER 20 YEARS

**T**HE LEAD GUITARIST from the band Styx loves the eye contact with fans when performing at smaller venues like the City National Grove of Anaheim.

"At the Grove, it is very easy to interact with the crowd, and I think the crowd really likes that," guitarist James Young of Styx said. "It's a great setup for the fans, and there's not a bad seat in the house."

Styx was the headliner when the indoor concert venue opened in 1999. The band was back in January at the Grove for the 11th time for its 20th anniversary season.

Over the last 20 years, the 1,700-seat venue has had more than \$45 million in gross ticket

things we've done well," he said. The venue also brings in comedy acts, including Jamie Foxx, Ali Wong and Bill Maher. Other recent shows include Ron White, Brian McKnight and Engelbert Humperdinck.

Each year, the venue plays host to roughly 90 concerts, in addition to organizing 170 special events. It is expanding its horizons by starting to hold some of the concerts outside.

Last year, the venue hosted a couple of small outdoor festivals, including the fourth annual California Hot Sauce Expo. Those events showed Mike Goldsmith, Nederlander Concerts senior programming director, that the venue can do more than just traditional shows, and that led to the idea of holding outdoor concerts, he said.

Goldsmith has been working with Hodges on Swanfest, an outdoor concert featuring dozens of artists that will take place March 30 in the venue's parking lot. "We're going to do at least two of these outdoor concerts a year, if not more, to diversify," he said. "It gives us greater versatility."

Opening the parking lot for events doubles the venue's indoor capacity, Hodges said.

Aramark has been the food and beverage provider for the venue since 2002 and offers full-service catering, aided in part by the venue's previous life: Because it originally opened as a restaurant, it has a

huge kitchen. "It's spectacular and it adds a great deal of service options to the venue," Hodges said.

"I walk everybody through the kitchen the first time they come in," Goldsmith said.

The venue used to host dinner-theater-style events by putting dining tables in the main part of the venue to serve dinner along with a show. After reviewing survey results from guests, the venue opted to try a new dining model this year, allowing guests to dine preshow in the lounge.

The venue got its current name in 2011 after it signed a five-year, \$1.25 million naming-rights deal with City National Bank. The deal was renewed with the bank in 2016 for an undisclosed amount.

Styx's Young was happy to be back at the Grove. "It's an easy place for people to get to, and we've always had a huge following in LA," he said. "We're happy to be part of it." ▣

—Noelle Riley



Styx opened the concert space in 1999 and has played the venue 11 times

sales and catered to 2.3 million fans, according to Los Angeles-based Nederlander Concerts, which manages the city-owned venue.

The location originally was an awards show-themed restaurant called Tinseltown that wasn't successful, said Nederlander Concerts CEO Alex Hodges. It was converted into a concert venue in 1999 and named The Sun Theatre, keeping its old-school Hollywood feel, before changing its name to The Grove of Anaheim.

The city of Anaheim bought The Grove in 2002 and selected Nederlander Concerts to manage, operate and book the venue. B.B. King, Willie Nelson, Stevie Nicks and Merle Haggard are just a few of the artists who have graced the stage since Nederlander Concerts took over, Hodges said.

"Prince did four sold-out shows a few years ago. We have a very diverse schedule. Looking at the 20-year milestone, you pinch yourself, and then we try to see what

## Scene: San Jose

### SILICON VALLEY VENUES ATTRACTING A GROWING DIVERSITY OF ACTS

**G**OOGLE'S PLANS TO build a new campus in downtown San Jose are great news for venues in San Jose, said Steve Kirsner, vice president of booking and events at the SAP Center, a 19,000-capacity arena that's home to the NHL's San Jose Sharks. Kirsner, who has worked at the SAP Center for nearly 23 years, shared his insights with *VenuesNow* Staff Correspondent Noelle Riley on the local market.



**STEVE KIRSNER**  
Vice president of booking and events, SAP Center at San Jose

#### Tell us about the San Jose venue scene.

There are venues of all sizes. There's a wide, wide variety of venues to choose from. The music scene is very healthy. Right now I have right about \$14 million in ticket sales for concerts that haven't happened yet. Most shows are selling extremely well.

#### How are ticket sales?

Very strong, but I'm seeing a little trend in the day-of-show sales. Our day-of-show sales have gone up considerably. We just had Marc Anthony here and sold over 780 tickets the day of the show. We also had 2Cellos and sold over 340 tickets the day of the show. At every event, I see a little more day-of-show sales than we've had in the past.

#### What's the venue competition like in your area?

It's about to become extremely more competitive with the Golden State Warriors' new venue (Chase Center in San Francisco), which opens in September. It will create three major arenas in the Bay Area. There's a lot of competition for entertainment, but with that said, it seems like everyone is healthy right now. As we learned at the Pollstar conference, the concert industry as a whole is extremely healthy.



### What are the fans like in San Jose?

We have a very diverse audience, from your general hockey fans and lots of families to a very large Latin community. We have a very large Asian community. Recently, we've been working with more Indian promoters for more ... shows from India. We serve everyone as much as we can.

### What's next for San Jose?

In our venue, we're having a lot of discussion about upgrades, new experiences and using technology to be 100 percent mobile. We're developing new ways to reach consumers and ways to talk to our guests. Security is another issue we're dealing with. We're working with all these new technologies to get everyone through faster but still have the venue secure.

Also, in the next five to 10 years, Google will be building a campus in downtown San Jose. We proposed that they build a theater as a part of their campus that they can use for meetings and they can use for other events, but there's been no solid plans. The Google campus is probably the single biggest transformation that's going to happen in San Jose. ▣



# PARAMOUNT THEATRE

**San Francisco Bay Area's Premiere Historic Theatre**

► 3,000 seats ◀



**Booking contact: Leslee Stewart, General Manager**  
► [lstewart@paramounttheatre.com](mailto:lstewart@paramounttheatre.com) ► 510.893.2300 x803  
► [www.paramounttheatre.com](http://www.paramounttheatre.com)

# THE STARS SHINE BRIGHTER IN FRESNO

## Selland Arena

9,000 Capacity

Largest GA Floor In The Region - 3,000 Capacity

## Saroyan Theatre

2,300 Capacity

Central California's Premier Show Place



Booking: 559.445.8100 | [FresnoConventionCenter.com](http://FresnoConventionCenter.com)