

July and August 1947

## This Month in L.A. Theatre History

Beginning this issue, I am instituting a fun little mini-feature to celebrate the history of Los Angeles theatre. We all know that LA is a movie town first and foremost, but there is a surprisingly long and rich live performance tradition as well.

The Coronet Theatre on La Cienega Blvd. opened on July 31, 1947 with the world premiere of the "American" version of *Galileo* by **Bertolt Brecht**, starring Charles Laughton and directed by Joseph Losey. The play closed on August 17.



But it would reopen on Broadway with the same cast in December of the same year.

*Below Charles Laughton in the title role.*



The Coronet was the legitimate stage home to over 300 productions when in 2008 ownership shifted to the music and comedy club Largo, which moved from its former Fairfax home to the Coronet.



*Above left: Laughton as Galileo, William Phipps as Andrea and Mickey Knox as the Little Monk from the production at the Coronet.*

Another August event was when the then York Theatre in Eagle Rock received its permit to install a marquee in 1923. The York actually began as a movie theater, eventually became a lecture hall and a church before becoming the home of the Bob Baker Marionette Theatre in 2019, whose name now fills that marquee.

The long tradition, since 1963, of enchanting children in Los Angeles was in doubt when the Marionette Theater lost its previous home near downtown, but now all is in joint with the world of puppets again!



*Right: 2019 Photo by Winona Bechtle*