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**Broads donate \$10 million to Santa Monica arts facility
Eli and Edythe Broad give \$10 million to endow Santa Monica
College's arts facility.**

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In a move that further widens the geographic reach of their local arts support, philanthropists Eli and Edythe Broad have donated \$10 million to create an endowment for programming and arts education at the new performing arts center for Santa Monica College.

In honor of the gift, to be announced today at the \$45-million arts facility, the center's 499-seat performance space will be named the Broad Stage and its 99-seat theater will be dubbed the Edye Second Space, already dubbed "the Edye" by center leadership.

The Broad Stage will be inaugurated Sept. 20 with a gala concert by singer Barbara Cook. The 2008-09 season begins Oct. 11 with opera star Frederica von Stade and will include performances by the Domingo-Thornton Singers, overseen by Los Angeles Opera general director Plácido Domingo; former L.A. Opera music director Kent Nagano, leading soloists from the Montreal Symphony; and L.A. dance companies Diavolo, Los Angeles Ballet, Helios Dance Theater, Lula Washington Dance Theatre and String Theory.

Dustin Hoffman, chairman of the Broad Stage advisory board, says he hopes to perform in one of the first theatrical productions. "I haven't found a play," he says, "but I think the plan is to do two plays a year, one winter and one summer, four weeks' rehearsal, six weeks' playing -- which is very attractive to people out here doing film, because in New York you don't usually get on the boards, so to speak, unless you can give six to eight months."

The "Edye" began operating in August with the Under the Radar series, which features emerging artists in performances scheduled for once or twice a month. Events will be free through the spring and will cost \$10 after that.

That schedule remains loose, says center artistic director Dale Franzen, to allow artists the latitude to schedule last-minute performances. And she hopes the price, comparable to a movie, will attract a young audience more likely to go to the multiplex or out clubbing than attend live theater.

While the Broad name has been attached to medical, educational and academic facilities -- as well to two local arts venues, UCLA's Edythe L. and Eli Broad Art Center and the Broad Contemporary Art Museum at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art -- it is the first time a performing arts venue has been named for the couple.

Because he spearheaded fundraising for the Music Center's \$274-million Walt Disney Concert Hall and is a major player in the Grand Avenue redevelopment project, Eli Broad's name is strongly associated with the revitalization of downtown. "I do believe the major center is going to be downtown Los Angeles, but that doesn't mean you can't also have a great regional center," Broad, a Westside resident, says. "The theater is state of the art compared with any to date that's been built in Los Angeles. I think you are going to find that all kinds of artists are going to want to perform there for that reason."

And most important, he adds, "you've got some 300-odd parking spaces right in front of it. It's not like some of the theaters in Hollywood where you've got to park two blocks away."

The Broads did not contribute to the construction of the 70,000-square-foot complex, designed by architect Renzo Zecchetto and funded by \$40 million raised by Santa Monica College through two city bond measures and \$5 million from private donors.

Broad says he heard about the project 10 years ago, but "frankly I didn't do anything about it because I didn't know if it would ever happen."

Broad and Franzen say they do not see the new center as competition for existing Los Angeles theaters. Comparing the Broad Stage and the Edye Second Space with two other major Westside theaters, Westwood's Geffen Playhouse and Culver City's Kirk Douglas Theatre, Franzen says: "Neither one of them has an orchestra pit; neither of them has appropriate load-in for a major production, or appropriate wing space.

"And those are used mostly for theater. This was built from the ground up as a state-of-the-art, multipurpose theater."