

FP-023

FAIR PARK BAND SHELL

Shakespearean plays. A free-flight bird show. The rock group The Ramones. World-class opera.

The Fair Park Band Shell has hosted all of those entertainment options, and more. In 1947, the popular radio program, "Truth or Consequences" broadcast from the Band Shell. And it has even appeared in the movies, serving as the backdrop for a scene featuring Pat Boone and Ann-Margret in the 1960 film, "State Fair".

Built in 1936 for the Texas Centennial Exposition, the Fair Park Band Shell is one of the 30 historic structures at Fair Park remaining from that fair. The concentric plaster arches of the Band Shell itself represent the architectural style known as Art Deco. But the backstage building, made of reinforced concrete, contains elements of another style that was beginning to make its appearance at that time, a style called Streamline Moderne.

Several years ago, the city hired an architectural firm to refurbish the Band Shell to its 1936 splendor. The restoration project - part of a comprehensive restoration of several Fair Park structures -- won numerous awards, including one from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

As part of the project, a lighting system made up of four neon tubes replaced the original incandescent lights. Stage managers can adjust the intensity of each tube so the bands of light can change colors independently, or in unison.

In 2002, more comfortable seats replaced the old wood-plank seating, bringing the Band Shell's restoration to completion. If you have a party or special event in mind that requires an outdoor setting, consider renting the band shell.

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