

Movie Theaters > United States > District of Columbia > Washington > Adams Morgan > Ontario Theatre

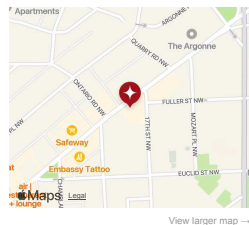
Ontario Theatre

1700 Columbia Road NW, Washington, DC 20009

Closed Demolished 1 screen 1,407 seats

Overview Photos Comments

3 people favorited this theater



The Ontario Theatre was a neighborhood theatre in the midtown business section. It opened November 1, 1951 with Ray Milland in "Rhubarb". It was originally operated by K-B Theatres as a first-run theatre. All seating was on a single floor.

It was remodeled and reopened by the Circle chain back in 1985. I vividly remember that it was a rather grand affair, with spotlights above the city, when the theatre showed the 70mm presentation of "Lifeforce".

The theatre still smelled of paint on the walls and seats as my friends and I took in the then state-of-the-art Kintek sound system and large screen. I saw "The Color Purple" at that theatre before it was abruptly shut down due to heavy losses. The theatre had no parking and was not really close to a Metro station to fill it capacity.

It became a mom and pop retail shop, and was demolished in October 2013.

Contributed by Jo

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Additional Info

Previously operated by:
K-B Theatres

Architects:
Frederick L.W. Moehle, John J. Zink

Styles:
Streamline Moderne

Nearby Theaters

- Ambassador Theatre
- Suns Cinema
- Savoy Theatre
- Gala Hispanic Theatre
- Booker-T Theatre

News About This Theater

Dec 9, 2012 — Happy 50th, "Lawrence of Arabia"

Mar 2, 2010 — Happy 45th, "The Sound of Music"

Recent comments (view all 36 comments)

- HowardBHaas** on May 30, 2011 at 6:37 pm
1984 exterior photo, when still showing movies, found on flickr <http://www.flickr.com/photos/kinorama/4377226720/>
- JodarMovieFan** on May 30, 2011 at 9:18 pm
Upon closer examination of the picture and without being able to zoom at the marquee to determine the picture playing, I have to say that picture had to be taken in the late 70s. Maybe '76, '77..look at the Mustang and Monte Carlo..those designs take it back to the 70s. I see no "newer" models I can identify that would predate the other two.
I say this because one of my favorite 70s shows was Charlie's Angels and in the opening one of the Angels is seen running from that era Mustang. The show ran in the mid-late 70s.
- sconnell1** on June 20, 2011 at 10:59 pm
Hello Ontario Theater lovers
I made a mistake in my comment back in 2009. "Becket" and "Mary Poppins" were not shown at the Ontario on a reserve seat basis, even though they were shown that way in other theaters around the country.
- CaptDave2013** on May 22, 2013 at 1:15 am
I was an usher at the Ontario (part time while on active duty in the Navy stationed at the Naval Photographic Center) and worked two films, "Becket" and "Mary Poppins". The Premiere of "Poppins" was held here and I ushered that show, a fund raiser for Project Hope, and Miss Andrews and Producer Blake Edwards both attended. Julie was stone cold and Blake was more than distant. However, at that time she was having an unpublished affair with Edwards (they later married) and perhaps, her behavior was reserved. My recollection was that during the long run of these two movies, the Ontario WAS operating as a reserved seat theater on weekends. In those days (1964-65), the Ontario was a first-class operation and we ushers wore red uniforms that made us look much like the famed Phillip Morris cigarette icon.
- 20015** on October 24, 2013 at 4:40 pm
Demolition was completed this week 10/24/2013).
- dickneeds111** on March 6, 2014 at 7:05 pm
While in the Navy and also stationed at the Naval Photo Center in 1960-1962 and 1964-1966 and then again for only 2 weeks in around 1983 I visited the Ontario many times. Saw the 70mm Roadshow of Sound Of Musicthere. I did not work there but I did work P.T. nights at the Sears offices in Silver Springs and I also was one of the projectionists at The NAS Anacostia base theatre.
- asbj** on October 3, 2014 at 12:57 pm
Where did the photos in this article come from? I've been doing some research on The Ontario Theater. If anyone knows where I can find images of any of the movie premiers held here or the concerts I'd really appreciate it. Google image search yields mostly images of the demolished Ontario. I'm looking for images of it in its full glory. Thank you! Please email any lead to asbj930@yahoo.com
- Coate** on March 17, 2015 at 1:03 pm
"The Sound of Music" premiered at the Ontario 50 years ago today. With a reserved-seat run of 97 weeks, do you think it is the long-run record holder for this venue?
Also, on a related note, I would like to mention my new 50th anniversary retrospective for "The Sound of Music" can be [read here](#).
- rivest266** on June 22, 2015 at 6:42 pm
November 1st, 1951 grand opening ad in photo section
- Tracy** on February 3, 2019 at 10:10 pm
Terrific piece on the theater's history on the Streets of Washington site.
The punk, metal and new wave bands that played there — wow!
<http://www.streetsofwashington.com/2011/10/ontario-theatres-many-past-lives.html>


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- Stay on-topic

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