

# **Amphitheaters, Entertainment al fresco.**

## **The Tradition.**

Amphitheaters have been with us for a long time; perhaps since the beginning of human existence. Formal amphitheaters go back at least to the Greeks around 600 B.C.

***Every park should have an amphitheater, formal or not, big or small; but a place for families to enjoy performances from children, clubs, friends or professionals.***

Contemporary capacities seem to fall into two ranges [see below]: 5,000 or 20,000 people with a combination of fixed and flexible seating. Costs for the 5,000-seat versions can range upwards to a million dollars.

## **Modern Amphitheaters and Bandshells.**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century amphitheaters have a variety of sizes, shapes and purposes; some are grassy mounds with a stage; others are magnificent structures. Properly scaled to the space and demand, they are great downtown assets. Some, like the historic Daytona Beach Band Shell remain functional and popular; some, like the Sanford Bandshell, have passed.

## **Outdoor Main Street Event Centers.**

Modern amphitheaters are entertainment, educational, cultural and political venues.

**Mid-size and formal.** The outdoor theaters in Eustis FL and Daytona Beach typify a formal outdoor theater that accommodates scheduled and spontaneous performances, amateur productions and community events.

Smaller, informal stages like that in the Joucas parking lot offer families a place for school and club productions. They are inexpensive, useful, easy to site and manageable by the city or HOA.



Joucas FR. Village center.



Daytona Beach FL



The Historic Sanford FL Bandshell [demolished]

## Selected Amphitheatres in Florida

<u>City</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Stage Type</u>	<u>Capacity</u>
Crystal River	Rock Crusher Canyon Amphitheater	Covered Stage	5,000
Daytona Beach	Daytona Beach Bandshell	Shell	4,500
Orlando	Hollywood Hills Amphitheater – Walt Disney World Resort	Stage	10,000
Panama City Beach	Aaron Bessant Park Amphitheater	Shell	10,000
Pensacola	Hunter Amphitheater at the Pensacola Maritime Park	Covered Stage	5,000
Saint Augustine	St. Augustine Amphitheatre	Tent	4,100
Tampa	MidFlorida Credit Union Amphitheatre	Covered Stage	20,000
West Palm Beach	Cruzan Amphitheatre	Covered Stage	19,000

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_contemporary\\_amphitheatres](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_contemporary_amphitheatres)

**Large and Professional.** Big amphitheatres are serious business. Expensive and hard to site, they require professional management for large concerts, productions and many revenue producing events. With capacities for 5,000 or greater, they need a specific staff and program to justify the cost of professional management and technology.



Lake Eola Park, Orlando FL.



Eustis FL Downtown Lakefront Park and Amphitheater at the “foot” of main street.



25 JUNE, 2015 - 04:10 BRYAN HILL

## Ancient Greek Theater and the Monumental Amphitheaters in Honor of Dionysus

To the Ancient Greeks, theater was a form of entertainment taken very seriously. People would come from all across the Greek world to attend the popular theaters held in open air amphitheaters. In their glory days, some amphitheaters could hold crowds of up to 15,000 people, and some were so acoustically precise that a coin dropped at the center of the performance circle could be heard perfectly in the back row. The theater was a place where politics, religion, the human condition, popular figures, and legends were all discussed and performed with great enthusiasm.

The origin of the dramatic arts in Greece can be found in Athens, where ancient hymns were sung in honor of their gods. These hymns were later adapted into choral processions where participants would dress up in costumes and masks. Eventually, certain members of the chorus evolved to take special roles within the procession, but they were not yet actors in the way we understand the term today. That development would come in the 6th century B.C., when the tyrant Pisistratus, who, at the time, ruled the city of Athens, established a series of public festivals.

**Source:** <http://www.ancient-origins.net/ancient-places-europe/ancient-greek-theater-and-monumental-amphitheaters-honor-dionysus-003292>