



# **FOX THEATRES**

## **The Fabulous Five**

**1928-29**

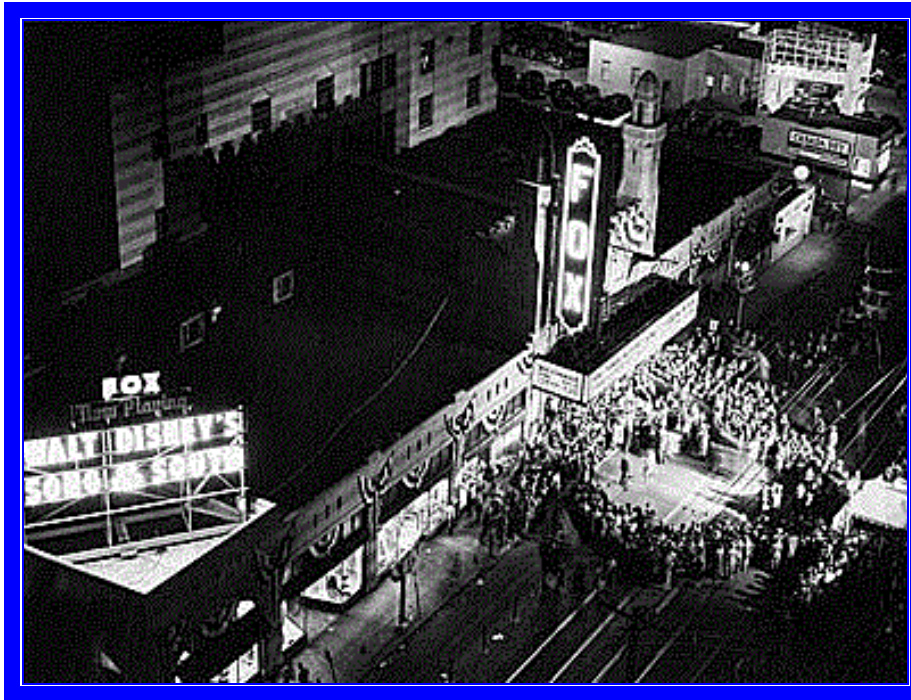
### **Part One**

### **Fox Atlanta**

### **ENGINEERING SERVICES**

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# **FOX ATLANTA**

**OPENED 1929**

**SEATING CAPACITY 4665**

**ORIGINAL OWNER The Shriners (Freemasons)**

**OPERATOR Fox Theatre Corporation**

**ARCHITECT Marye, Alger & Vinour**

**STATUS In use after restoration**

**REFRIGERATION Carrier replaced original in 1960**

**LIGHTING EQUIPMENT Hub Electric Co**

## THE SHRINERS CONNECTION

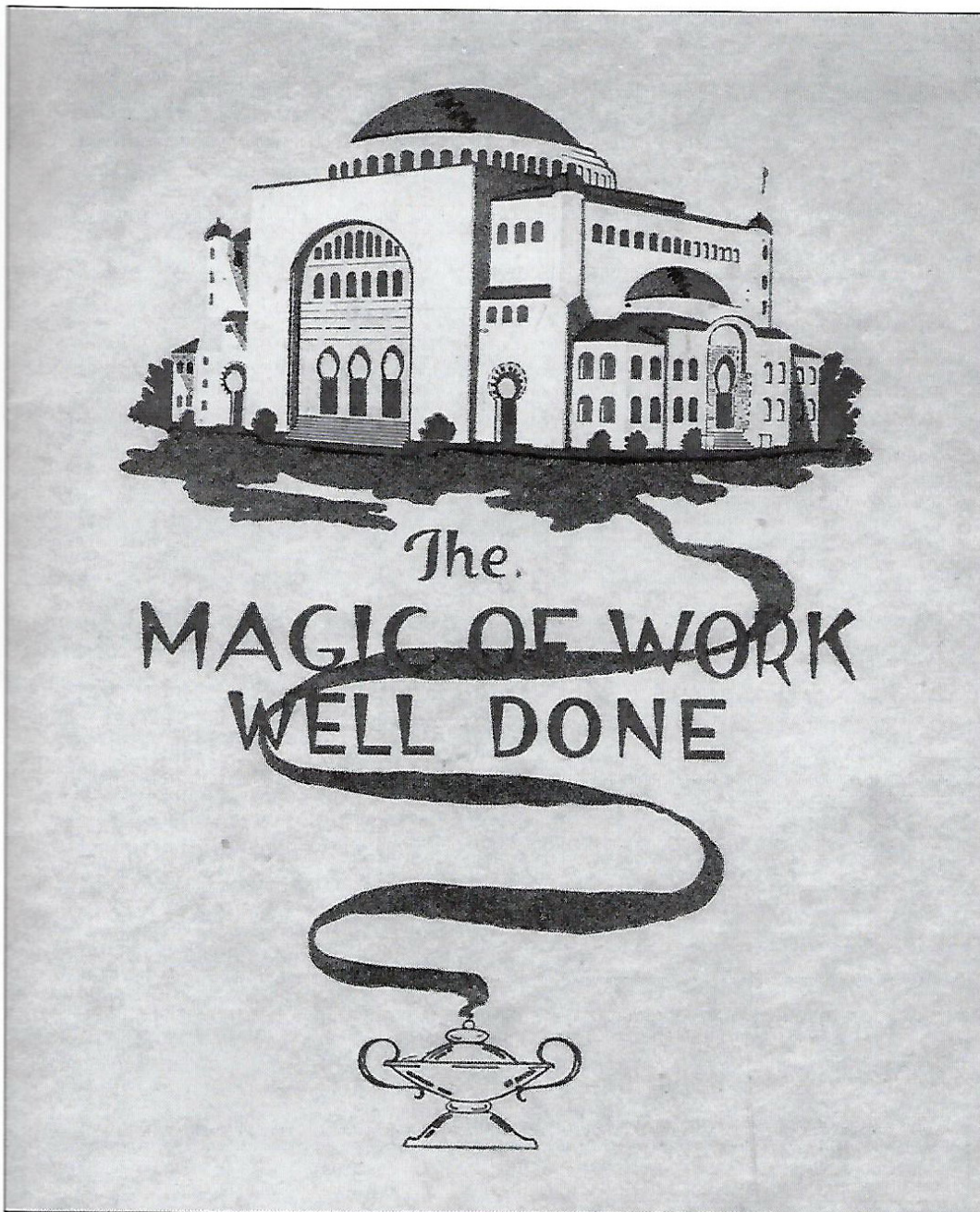


In 1928, the Fox was originally conceived as a home for Atlanta's Shriners organization. To create a headquarters befitting the group's prominent social status, the Shriners looked to the ancient temples of the Far East to inspire a mosque-style structure befitting their stature. Storied architectural gems like the Alhambra in Spain and Egypt's Temple of Kharnak heavily influenced the building's elaborate and intensely ornate design. Bursting with soaring domes, minarets and sweeping archways, the exterior of the building gave way to stunning gold leaf details, sumptuous textiles and exquisite trompe l'oeil art (an art technique that uses realistic imagery to create optical illusions) inside.

Ultimately, the design was so fantastical, it became more of a financial burden than the Shriners could bear. Shortly before its completion, the Shriners leased their beautiful auditorium to William Fox, a movie mogul who had launched his empire by building theatres across the country to meet America's insatiable affection for the new moving pictures that were sweeping the nation. By the end of the 1920s, these aptly-named "movie palaces" were an integral part of nearly every community in the country, each one more gilded and exquisite than the next. Developers like Fox spared no expense, understanding all too well that these movie palaces were the gateway to a brave new world, transporting eager audiences to exotic, elegant settings they could only imagine.



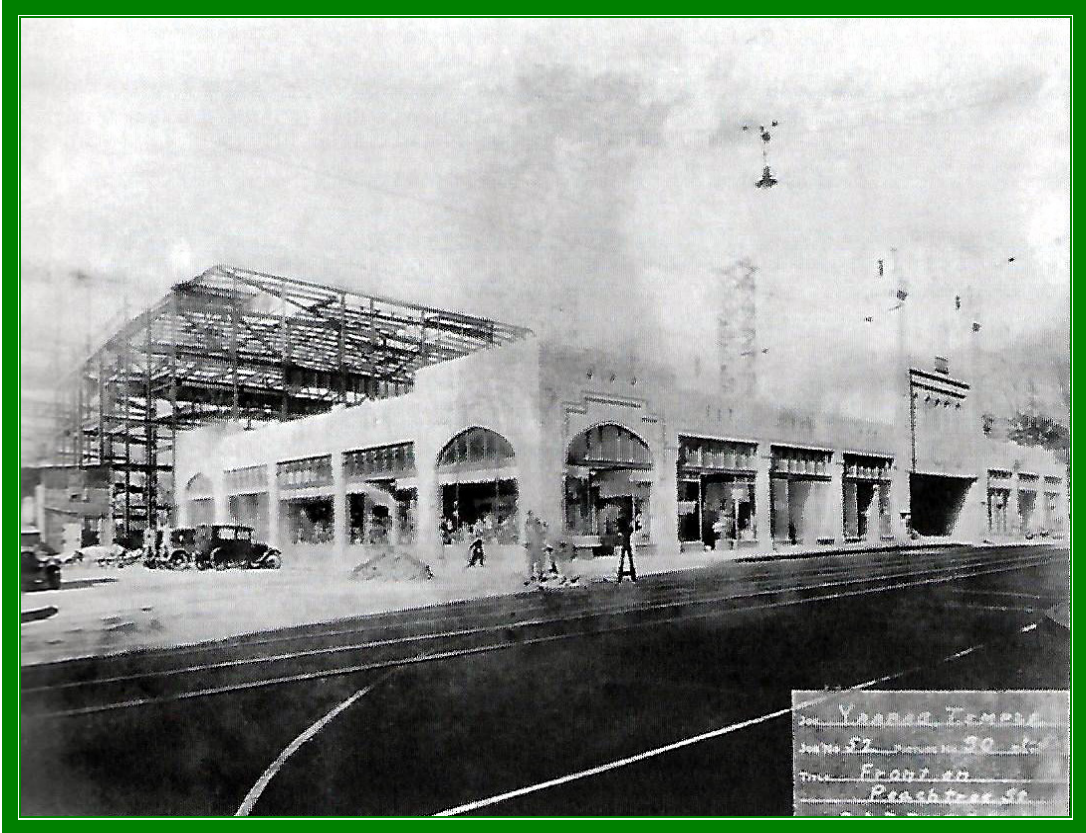
## BUILDING THE TEMPLE



It is believed the Atlanta chapter wanted their mosque to be Shrine headquarters for the entire Southeastern United States. They knew the venture would not be cheap. This is the cover of the brochure they created to promote the building fund they established. The funding campaign ran just two weeks between October 12 and October 26. It reached out to all 4,000 of the organization's members, who included Atlanta's most influential civic and business leaders. A group of 500 nobles residing throughout the Southeast were tasked with helping to recruit donors. Those who pledged a loan had two years in which to pay and were given a beneficial loan certificate issued by the temple, guaranteed by group insurance and a sinking fund. The Shriners raised moneys surpassing their goal of more than \$1 million. Ground-breaking was held on November 23, 1925, although construction didn't start for two years. (Atlanta Masonic Library and Museum [AMLM].)



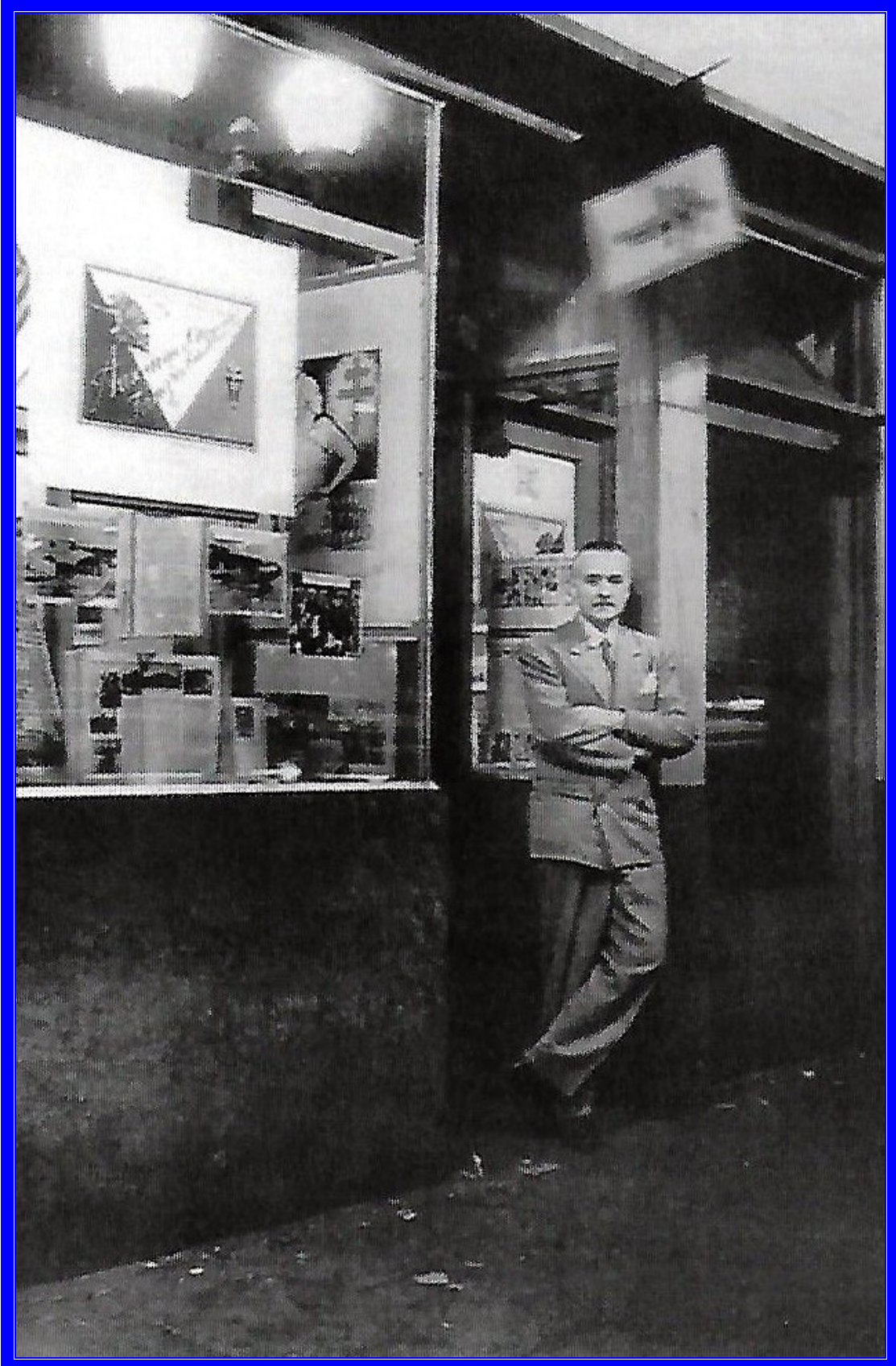
# BUILDING THE TEMPLE



(Fox Theatres)



## THE FOX ATLANTA



Architect Ollivier Vinour (Fox Theatre)



## WILLIAM FOX

**W**ILLIAM FOX (1879–1952) was born in Tulchva (Tolcsva), Austria-Hungary, as Wilhelm Fried. By 1904 he had purchased his first nickelodeon. Within a decade he had become an independent exhibitor and distributor who led the successful fight against the Motion Picture Patents Company which at the time was monopolizing the industry. In 1915, he founded Fox Film Corporation, which in 1935 merged with 20th Century to become 20th Century Fox studios. At the time, each studio had a film star; some had two or three. Fox had Theda Bara, a very popular American silent film and stage actress whose *femme fatale* roles helped make her one of film's earliest sex symbols.

In one of the biggest deals ever transacted in show business, in 1929 William Fox acquired all 255 theatres of the West Coast Theatre circuit, appraised at \$100 million. He later added to his string the famous Roxy Theatre in New York. Eventually, Fox controlled an estimated \$165 million worth of entertainment.

In 1925, Fox purchased the American rights to the Tri-Ergon system—invented by three Germans, Josef Engl (1893–1942), Hans Vogt (1890–1979) and Joseph Massolle (1889–1957) and patented in 1919—and the Movietone sound-on-film inventions of Theodore Case (1888–1944) which debuted in 1927 with F. W. Murnau's film, *Sunrise (A Song of Two Humans)*. *Sunrise* was one of the first films with a soundtrack of music and sound effects. At the same time Fox introduced Movietone News, the first commercially successful sound film. At the time Fox proclaimed: "no second of every 24 hours passes but that the name of William Fox is on the screen in some part of the world." Converting theatres to sound was expensive, and Fox tried to convert his theatres—over 1,000 of them—all at once, then had an automobile accident, tried to buy out Marcus Loew, met the Great Depression, lost control of Fox Film Corporation, and lost a government anti-trust suit all in a short period of time. In a word, he was overwhelmed. His empire crumbled. Fox went bankrupt in 1936 and served six months in prison. He never recovered, but his five great Fox theatres remain glorious symbols of the great age of movie palaces.



# THE FOX ATLANTA



At The New Fox  
There Will Always Be ...  
*A Show of Shows!!!*

Surrounding the patron with every luxury, comfort and beauty known in the art of theatre construction, this magnificent palace is like the setting for a beautiful jewel.

The great Cathedral Organs responding to the masterful touch of Iris Wilkins, the world's greatest woman organist . . . the incomparable Don Wilkins as Master of Ceremony . . . the superb symphonies of the Fox Grand Orchestra led by that musical genius, Enrico Leide . . . first run selected pictures in sound and color . . . Fanchon & Marco Stage Revues, with from 35 to 50 people to show you a newer and more brilliant "Idea" each week . . . Fox Movie-tone News, "It Speaks for Itself" . . . A well-trained Singing Chorus . . . selected short subjects . . . all combine to complete the setting of this beautiful jewel and make the New Fox "The Last Word" in Screen and Stage presentations.

Newest and Finest of Over 1,000 Fine  
Fox Theatres From Coast to Coast



PEACHTREE AT PONCE DE LEON

OPENS  
CHRISTMAS  
DAY

ON & IRIS WILKINS



**THE FOX ATLANTA**



## THE FOX ATLANTA HVAC&R



**The Fox was air conditioned by an all-air system using a spray type air washer supplied with chilled water from an ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) refrigeration plant. A Carrier centrifugal water chiller replaced the ammonia refrigeration in 1946.**



## THE FOX ATLANTA HVAC&R

The 1929 system was an ammonia based system consisting of an air wash, wheel, motor and chiller. In 1946, a centrifugal chiller was added to convert the system from ammonia to water.

Still, Delaney says the system was always extremely efficient.

“We could chill down the entire theater in about 10 minutes,” she explains. “That was very handy when you’ve got 5,000 guests in for a rock concert.”

On Monday with the help of a crane, the Fox’s new air conditioner was delivered. But the original series of units will stay on as a back up if modern technology ever fails.

The upside for Fox theatregoers? Better air conditioning circulation in the previously persnickety Egyptian Ballroom region of the complex.

At a retirement ceremony last week, Fox staffers cut a cake in the shape of the system’s main chilling components nicknamed Big Red, Bertha and Misty and signed a matted photograph of the retiree.

# THE FOX ATLANTA HVAC&R



Spray air washer and filter bank



# THE FOX ATLANTA HVAC&R



Two bank spray air washer and spray nozzle close-up



# THE FOX ATLANTA HVAC&R



"A giant flywheel is now used to produce the energy for the air conditioning" ? (Text on website)

# THE FOX ATLANTA HVAC&R



The 1946 Carrier centrifugal chiller



## THE FOX ATLANTA HVAC&R



The chiller was replaced in 2010 after being in service for 64 years

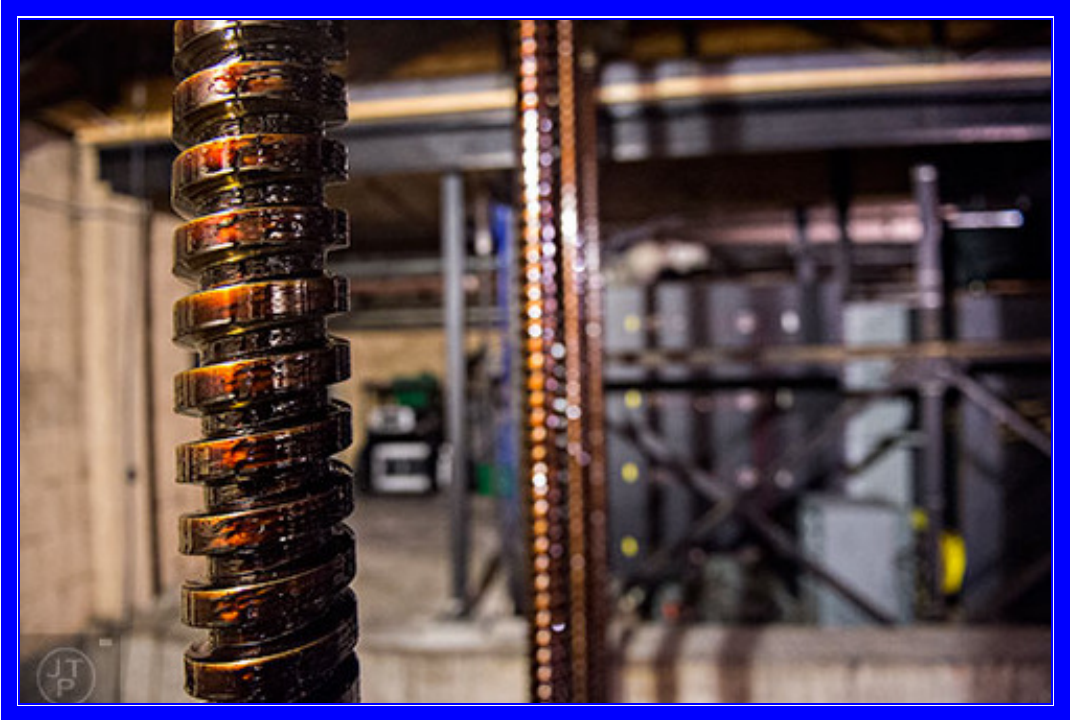
# THE FOX ATLANTA THE RENOVATED HVAC&R

## FOX THEATRE RENOVATES HVAC SYSTEM

The historic Fox Theatre, located on Peachtree Street in the heart of Atlanta, Georgia, hosts more than 300 performances a year. This beloved local venue, opened in 1929, is listed as a National Landmark Building and is on the National Historic Register. In February of 2010, the Fox Theatre began extensive renovations which included substantial changes to the HVAC systems. The planned HVAC system upgrades included renovating the original 300-ton air handling unit and the 1946 chiller, adding a new chiller system with cooling tower and pumps, and replacing three additional air handling units. The project, as with most occupied historic buildings, provided many unique challenges for the project team. For instance, all work had to be completed without disrupting the theatre's planned schedule of events. The team was also tasked with minimizing any potential damage to the historic structure's original systems and finishes. Engineering firm Leppard, Johnson & Associates, along with Fox Theatre management, chose McKenney's to perform the HVAC system upgrades. Utilizing their extensive experience with both the old systems to be renovated and new systems proposed, McKenney's was able to support the project team by tailoring the installation of the designed system to minimize both system downtime and disturbance of the existing architecture. For instance, early in construction McKenney's identified a different way to install much of the new pipe, which allowed the existing system to stay in place longer and reduced the amount of time required to perform the swap from old to new. Additionally, the team discovered they could install the new main air handling unit by routing it through the ceiling outside of the theatre's Egyptian Ballroom rather than through the building's north wall, which would have been costly to match and reinstall. The McKenney's team also showed a unique resilience in the face of new challenges, which occur frequently whenever complex projects are performed on historical buildings. When two of the new fans were too large to fit into the building through any interior openings, in lieu of installing multiple smaller fans the team found a route for one of the fans through an existing exterior louver. They broke down the other fan and installed it in sections in the building attic. When it was discovered that a planned route through an existing shaft would be too much of a fire hazard if welded steel pipe was used, McKenney's turned to CPVC which could be installed with minimal risk to the building. McKenney's desire to find the best solution led them to find alternative methods, resulting in a project finished on time with zero change orders. Today, the historic Fox Theatre maintains her elegant, authentic appearance with an added benefit: renovated HVAC systems that significantly improve patron comfort.

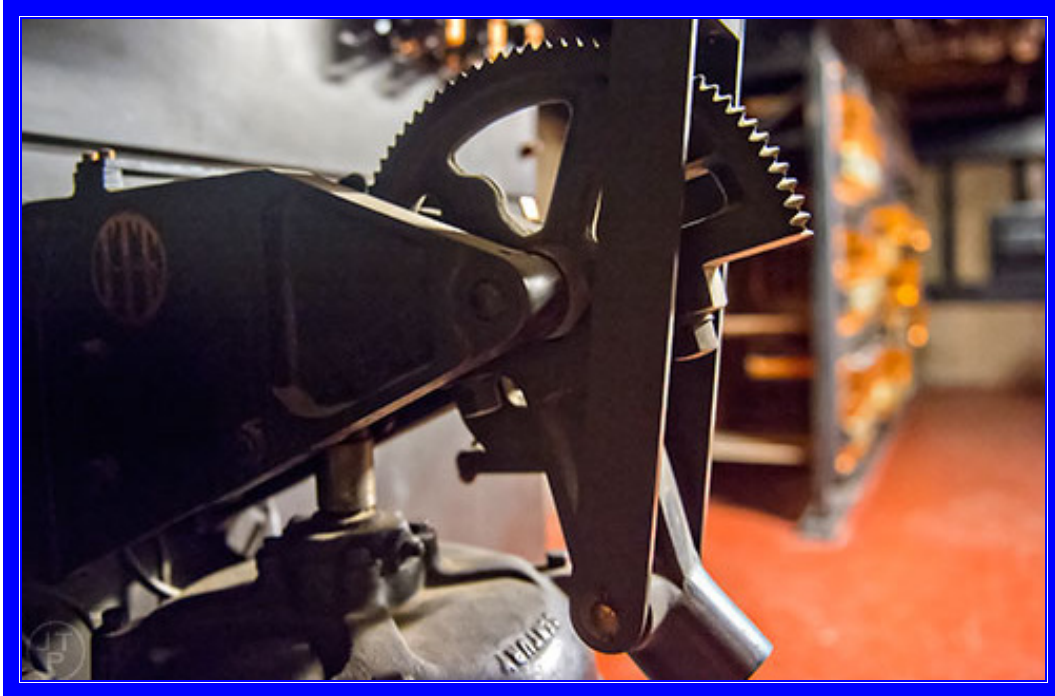


# THE FOX ATLANTA STAGE ELEVATOR



The screw-type stage lifting mechanism

## THE FOX ATLANTA LIGHTING CONTROLS



The now unused electrical switchboards



# THE FOX ATLANTA LAMPS

HUB PRODUCTS FROM SERVICE TO SOCKET



## Don't Grope in the Dark Install Hub-o-lite Stage Floor Pockets

**HUB-O-LITE** is a step ahead of all other floor pockets because it is equipped with a pilot light which automatically illuminates when the cover is opened, and it remains burning until it is closed.

Hub-o-lite also has another advantage over all others. In addition to the regular designation discs, each receptacle is provided with a colored jewel which glows whenever the door is opened—thus giving a positive light indication to the operator placing the plugs.

Besides these refinements and improvements, Hub-o-lite Pockets are well built. They are sturdy, durable, and automatically foolproof with the wiring entirely concealed by a partition. They are provided with 50 and 100 ampere plugs and receptacles. Write for specifications and prices.

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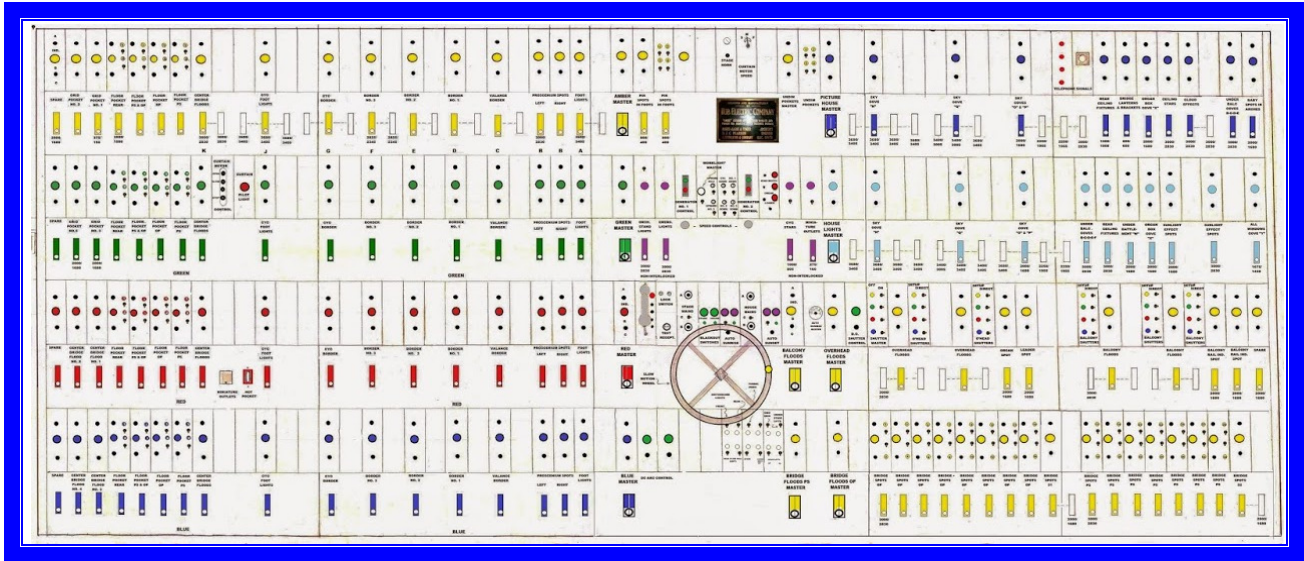


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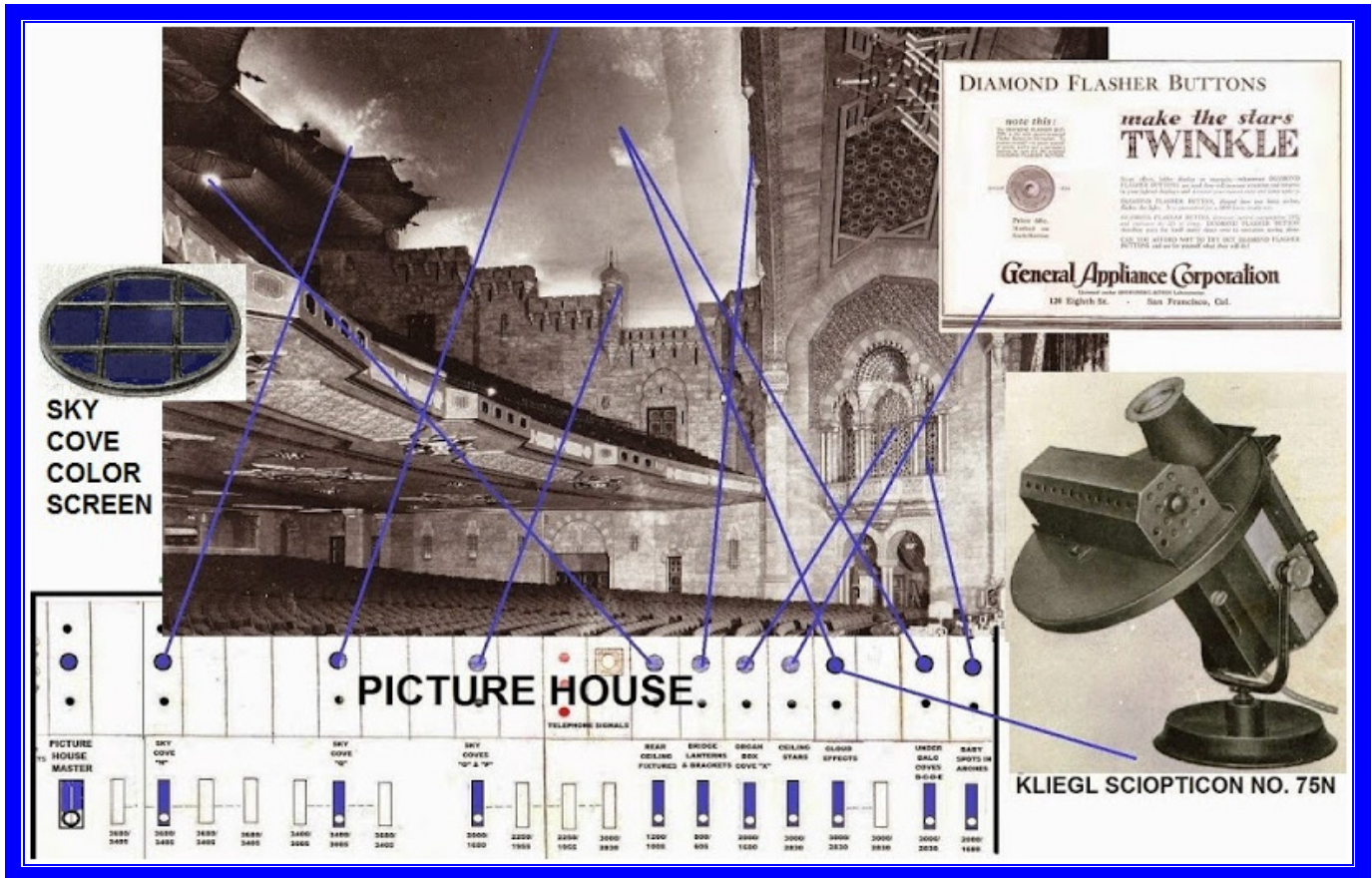




# THE FOX ATLANTA LIGHTING CONTROLS



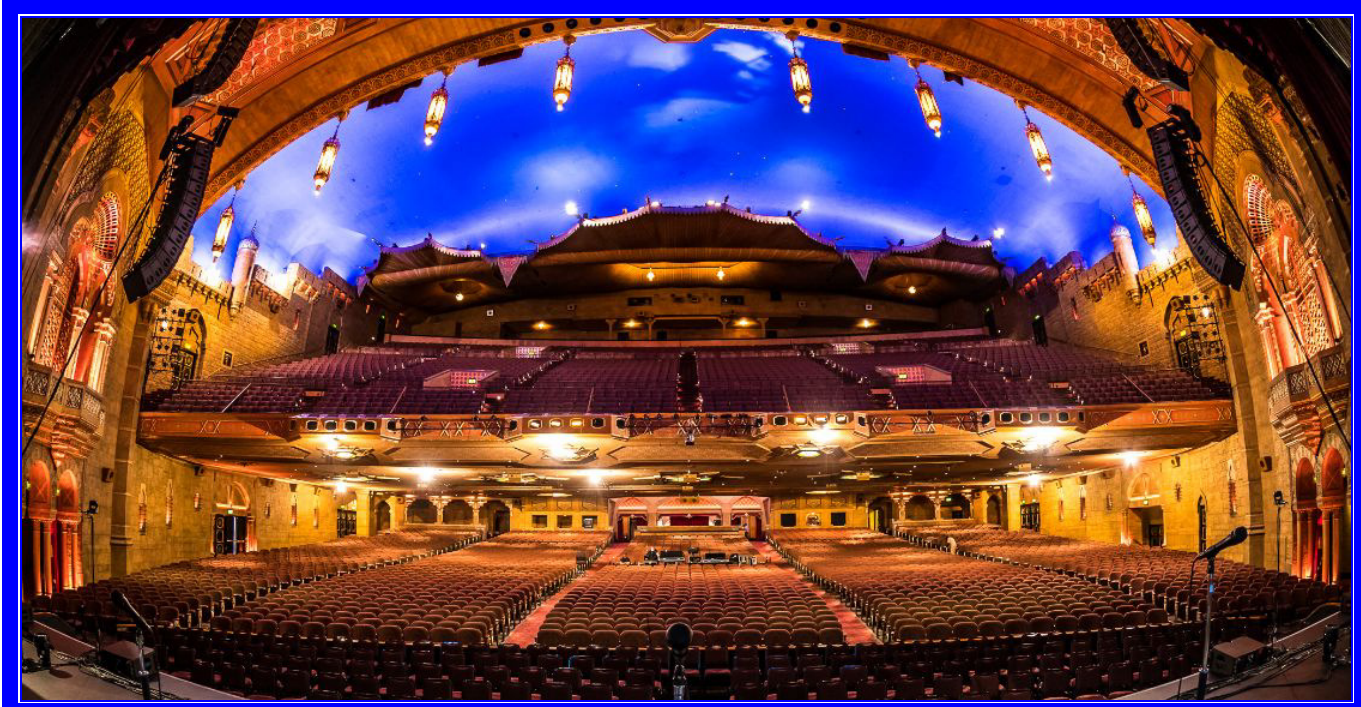
Lighting switchboard, two hundred dimmer diagram



Controls for house lights, blue sky (twinkling stars), red & orange organ boxes, windows flow effects



# THE FOX ATLANTA LIGHTING





# THE FOX ATLANTA LIGHTING

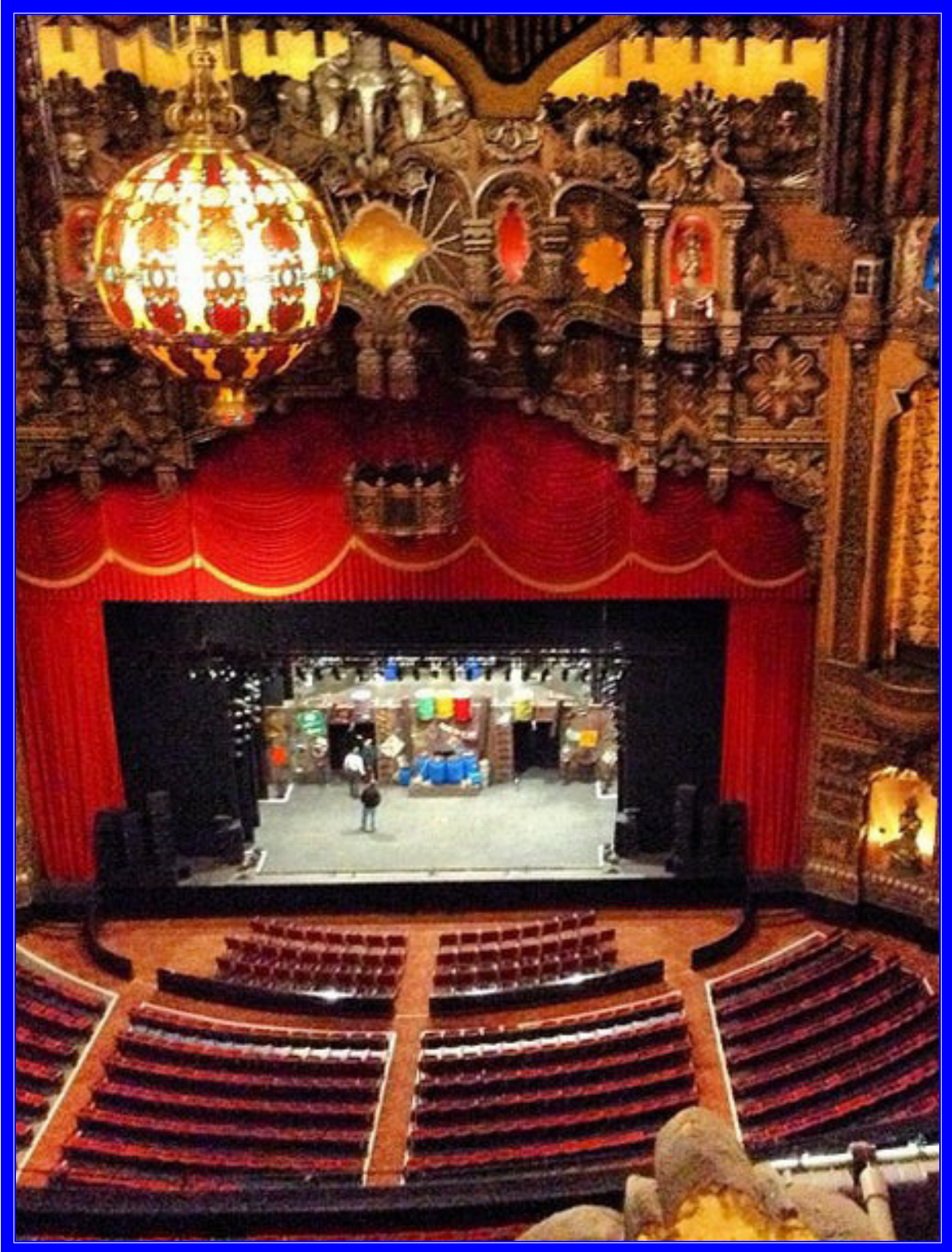




**THE FOX ATLANTA  
LIGHTING**



**THE FOX ATLANTA  
LIGHTING**





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