

Air Conditioning American Movie Theatres 1917-1932

Ultra Modern Theatres



Paramount Theatre, New York

**From *Motion Picture News*, Nov-Dec 1926
Featuring the architecture of Rapp & Rapp**

Ultra Modern Theatres

Paramount, New York

In Colour

Paramount, New York

Oriental, Chicago

Michigan, Detroit

Uptown, Chicago

Shea's, Buffalo

New Palace, Chicago

Oriental, Chicago

Michigan, Detroit

Joillet, Illinois

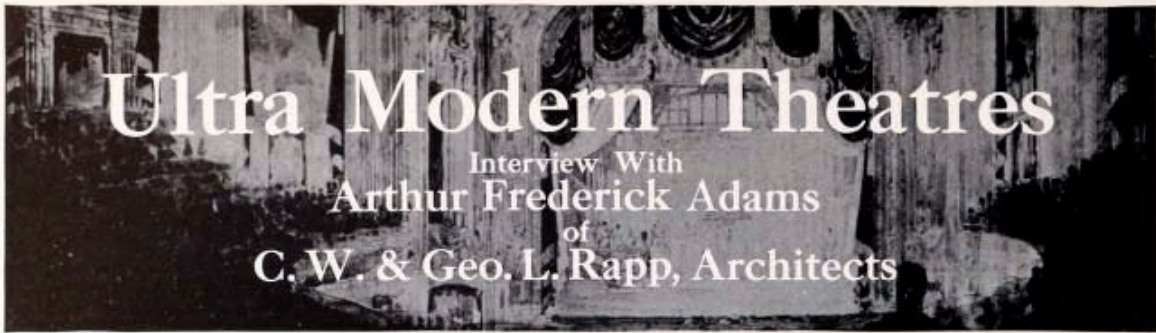
Tivoli, Chicago

Brooklyn, New York

Chicago, Chicago



Paramount Theatre, New York



Ultra Modern Theatres

Interview With
Arthur Frederick Adams
of
C. W. & Geo. L. Rapp, Architects

The Paramount

ULTRA-MODERN motion picture theatres have made our present building era in the amusement field the most outstanding of all time. Moreover, they take their place among America's finest structures.

Smaller houses are now being designed in modest imitation of our finest theatres. And it is for that reason that a review of these ultra theatres is timely and of particular interest to theatre owners, architects and builders.

The world's most palatial motion picture theatre, the new Paramount, which has risen in Times Square, New York, affords, perhaps, the most advanced thought in ultra-modern theatres. This theatre is a monument to the entire motion picture industry, a tribute to the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, and a testimonial to the supreme achievement of the architectural firm of C. W. and George L. Rapp.

The new key theatre of the nation, executed by C. W. and George L. Rapp of Chicago and New York, is the crowning glory of that firm's thirty years of experience. In view of its outstanding location in the greatest theatrical district in the world, these architects were confronted with the most perplexing problems of their careers. The high valuation of the land, the prominent view which the building commanded and the ever growing population of New York City, were factors that demanded the utmost study and thought. The decisions arrived at incorporated all the angles, it is predicted, to meet conditions as they will exist fifty years hence. No theatrical enterprise has required more intensive planning nor such exhaustive research.

The new Paramount Theatre and accompanying office building represents a money cost upward of \$10,000,000, not including the ground on which it stands, facing Broadway and extending from 43rd to 44th streets. The land alone is valued at \$6,500,000. The building is 38 stories in height, and the upper part towers skyward in eight setbacks, the architecture being governed by the zoning

act, which prevails in the erection of tall buildings in New York City. These setbacks are illuminated at night by more than a thousand indirect reflectors, creating a remarkably beautiful effect.

The theatre itself has a seating capacity of 4,000 and occupies the lower ten stories of the gigantic structure. The entire conception of the new Paramount has been formed from the styles of the Louis XIV and Louis XVI periods of architecture and decoration.

One enters this spectacular edifice through a large main entrance off Times Square passing under a triumphal arch which is superbly carved in stone and brilliantly lighted by concealed effects, giving one the impression of a scenic fête, such as were known during the time of the French kings.

You are next received into the Black and Gold marble hall or rotunda, which rises in semi-circular fashion to a height of about seventy feet. The columns are of imported Italian marble and the hall is surmounted by a rich, golden dome.

The Hall of Nations, next entered, is symbolic of the international scope of the motion picture and of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation. It is decidedly unique in architecture, theatre or otherwise, for imbedded in the walls of the room are stones from historic buildings in 35 countries.

The most noteworthy, perhaps, is the stone taken from the oldest theatre in the world, the Dionysus in Greece, which was built in 496 B. C. A bronze historical tablet adorns each stone, forming an exhibit that will create world-wide interest and enthusiasm.

Leaving the Hall of Nations one enters the grand lobby, termed the Paramount Marble Hall, measuring fifty feet in width and two hundred feet in length. More than half a million dollars in Italian marble was expended in this space. Great columns support a vaulted ceiling rich in decorations, paintings, sculpture and electrical effects. The richest effect yet conceived



by man has been produced in this indescribably beautiful lobby with its draperies, marbles and bronzes.

What is claimed to be the largest pipe organ ever constructed, which, it is said, took three years to build, has been installed. The console is located at the extreme left side of the orchestra pit and is mounted on an elevator.

The orchestra pit and platform is of remarkable construction. It is of the disappearing type and so arranged by a clever mechanical device that the entire orchestra platform can be raised to the level of the stage, which has a thirty-foot depth, and rolled back onto the stage.

Loges and mezzanine boxes have unique lighting effects developed from cut glass crystals, all of which have been imported from the great crystal works of Europe. The idea is that of a diamond horseshoe displaying a richness of silver and gold which is distinctively eccentric in presentation.

Ascend Stairs Without Exertion

As is customary in Rapp & Rapp houses, the staircases have been arranged in such a way that one may ascend without exertion, in fact everything has been done to make climbing a pleasure, as numerous objects of art may best be seen from these stairs.

The retiring and smoking rooms are executed in flawless appointment, with many features entirely new to the theatre world. Each one a novelty, luxuriously furnished.

In no theatre in the land has the profession been so thoroughly considered. No expense has been spared to give the performers all the comforts of life amid happy surroundings. Starting from the basement, one will find a huge space allotted to the care of performing animals. Here they have a daily bath, are fed in clean and up-to-date fashion and are exercised by special keepers.

Arriving at the stage level one is met by the doorman. He acts as a hotel clerk, accommodating the entertainers in every possible way. On this floor are the mammoth

ceiling entrances where scenic productions are received. The entire stage equipment can be accepted and erected within one hour, thanks to the latest in special machinery for this purpose.

Taking an elevator to the next floor we enter the Green Room, elaborately furnished in every detail. This large room permits the actors to receive their friends, and is also used for small functions and the receptions that follow the end of engagements. The dressing rooms are indeed an actor's paradise.

The Famous Players-Lasky section, occupying the space between the 5th and 12th floors, is furnished in magnificent style. Each floor has running ice water. Communication between floors where inter-office messages are used are through the pneumatic tube system, while electric dumb waiters facilitate the handling of mail. A private automatic elevator connects the executive offices of all floors. Offices are equipped where visiting managers to the home office may make their headquarters and transact business while in the city.

There are five projection rooms, eliminating any delay or waits when a screening is urgent. A dictograph system connects all offices, and there are three hundred telephone connections in the Famous-Players offices alone. The principal executive offices are equipped with a shower and locker room, while shower lockers are installed on each floor for the use of all executives of the company.

A completely equipped miniature hospital has been installed, having a surgery room, dispensary, X-ray room, laboratory and separate rest rooms for men and women.

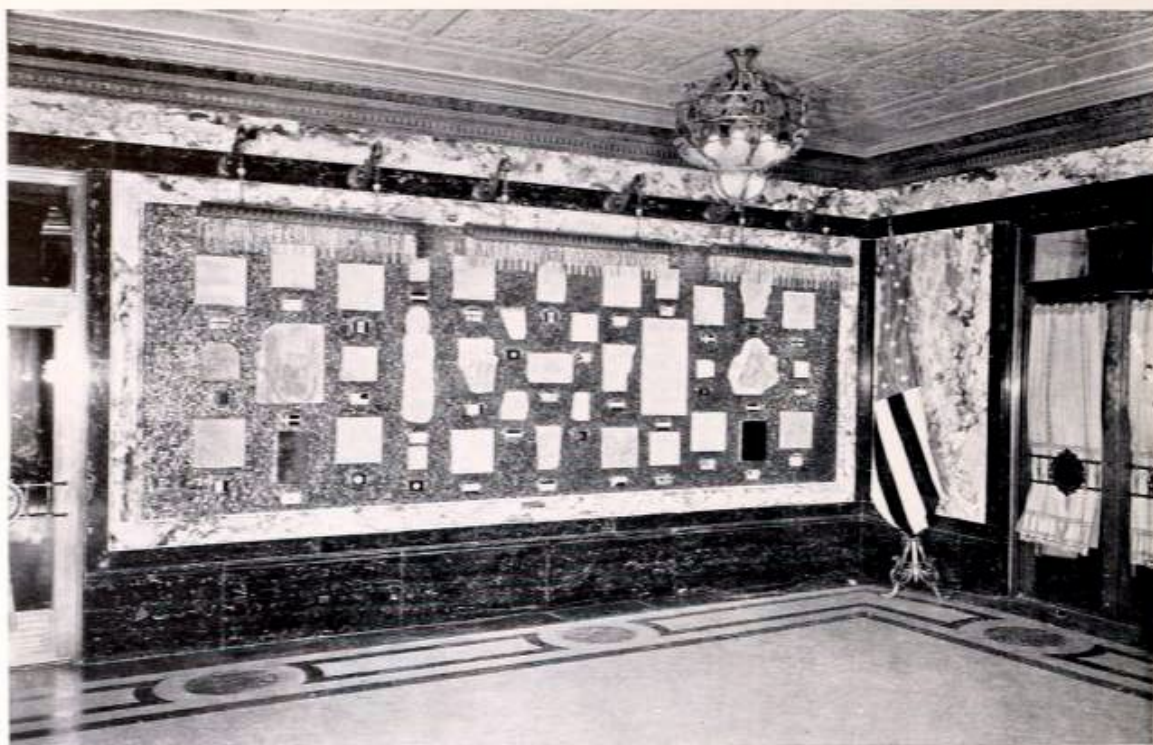
Unique Flashing Globe

The executive offices of the higher officials have imported fireplaces, hand-wrought chandeliers, and an atmosphere of quiet dignity.

There were 7,000,000 bricks used in this building, 10,950 tons of steel, 100,000 bags of cement and 68,000



PERIOD FURNITURE AND ART OBJECTS ADD CHARM TO THE ELIZABETHAN ROOM IN THE PARAMOUNT THEATRE
C. W. & Geo. L. Rapp, Architects



PANEL CONTAINING HISTORICAL STONES FROM THE VARIOUS COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD, HALL OF NATIONS, PARAMOUNT THEATRE

G. W. & Geo. L. Rose, Architects

cubic feet of limestone and granite, while 400,000 rivets hold the steel in place. Before the building started, 40,000 cubic yards of rock had to be excavated and the building rests on solid rock foundation 53 feet below the surface. As each cubic yard of rock weighs 2,700 pounds, the weight of the material excavated almost equals that of the building.

A flashing globe 455 feet above the street level will mark the hours for Broadway's first great tower clock on the Paramount building and theatre. The globe will be designed as a map of the world, representing the world-wide activities of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, and illuminated with high power lamps from within. It will be visible for miles, standing 40 feet higher than the present top of the Paramount tower.

The great glass ball will be 19 feet in diameter, and will be composed of ninety squares of reinforced glass sheeted with copper. Four of these squares will be hinged to swing outward, giving access to the surface from within. The smokestack of the building will pass directly through the center of the ball, and alone measures six feet and a half in diameter. A steel ladder reaching up from the tower below gives access to the ball and passes on through to the top where a runway two feet and a half wide passes around the top of the stack. Steel walkways also pass completely around the interior of the ball, from which workmen may tend the mechanism.

Landmark for Times Square

The lamps inside the ball will be connected with a flasher switch so geared to the great clock that it will flash red on the quarter hours and white on the even. Thus, the light, which is a steady white, at the hour of twelve will turn and flash four times, immediately turning to white again it will flash twelve times. At a quarter after the hour it will flash red once, two on the half and three at

three-quarter, always turning to a steady white in the meantime.

Besides being a great landmark for Times Square in the future, the ball itself will be significant of what motion pictures have done for the world. Trade now follows the film instead of the flag, and in the thatched huts of Africa, as well as in every city in the world, American motion pictures are shown. This great ball at Times Square stands as an emblem for American motion pictures, which enlighten the universe. It is a fitting addition to the new Paramount, which stands as the greatest monument of the industry.

World Traversed for Furnishings

Adjoining this hall are spacious foyers with mammoth ceilings, enriched with marble columns and attractively decorated panels. These abound in rare furniture and imported furnishings. Experts were commissioned to traverse the world over in order to secure the rarest and most priceless art treasures without which the building would seem incomplete.

The entire auditorium is surmounted by a huge dome which is penetrated by large openings through which the public may view the lower portion of the auditorium. Some term it the spectators' gallery. This dome is lighted brilliantly with different tones of colored lighting effects, such as flood lights, chandeliers and special electrical apparatus to obtain atmospheric effects. The proscenium arch is an outstanding feature. There is a wonderful mural painting depicting the progress of music, drama and the spirit of song and surmounting this proscenium arch is a riot of colors in perfect harmony. Rapp & Rapp and the owners were especially generous in regard to space. An auditorium which could have seated 6,000 has been sacrificed for 4,000 seats in which the patrons may relax and rest in perfect ease.

Early colour printing

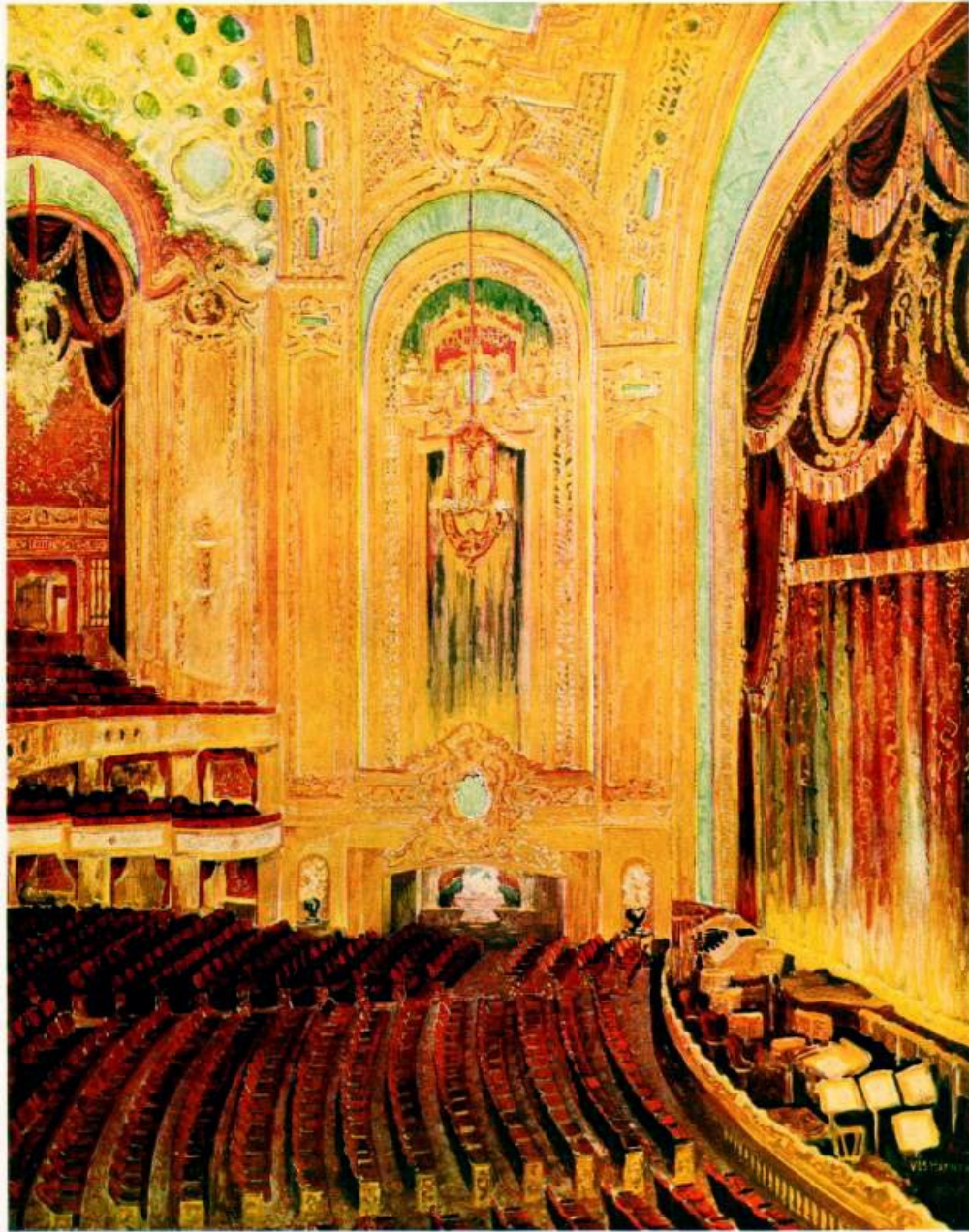


STUDY IN COLOR OF THE AUDITORIUM, PARAMOUNT THEATRE, NEW YORK.
G. W. & GEORGE L. RAPP, ARCHITECTS.



GRAND STAIRS AND FOUNTAIN, LOBBY OF THE PARAMOUNT THEATRE, NEW YORK
C. W. & GEO. L. RAPE, ARCHITECTS

The Lobby & Grand Stairs of the Paramount Theatre, New York



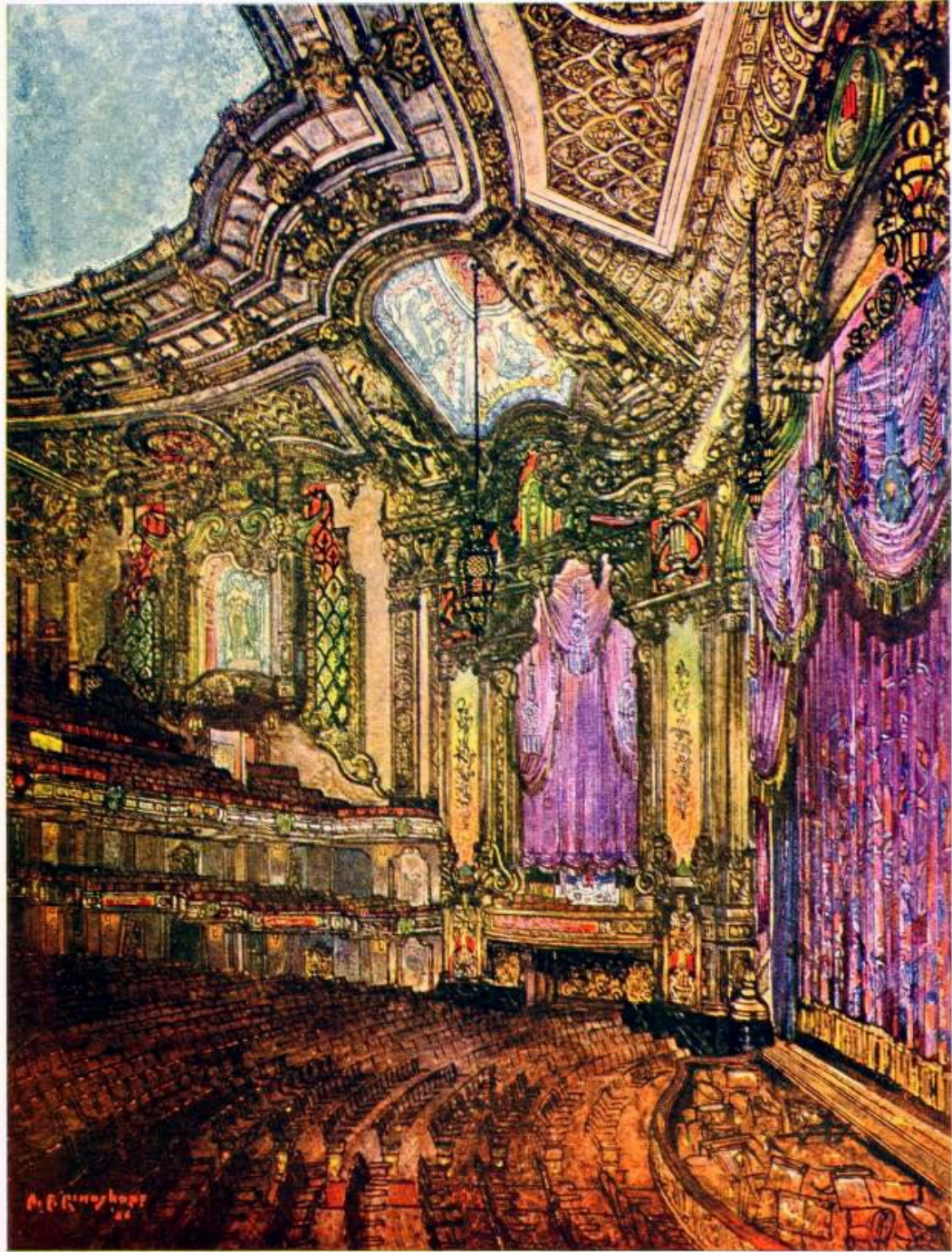
ORGAN SCREEN AND PROSCENIUM ARCH, PARAMOUNT THEATRE, NEW YORK
C. W. & GEO. L. RAPP, ARCHITECTS

Organ Screen & Proscenium Arch, Paramount Theatre, New York



AUDITORIUM OF THE PARAMOUNT THEATRE, NEW YORK, SHOWING MEZZANINE, LOGES AND BALCONY
C. W. & GEO. L. RAPP, ARCHITECTS

Auditorium showing Mezzanine Loges & Balcony Paramount Theatre, New York



VIEW OF THE ORGAN SCREEN AND SURROUNDING TREATMENT, ORIENTAL THEATRE, CHICAGO
C. W. & GEO. L. RAPP, ARCHITECTS

Color drawing by A. C. Runnberg

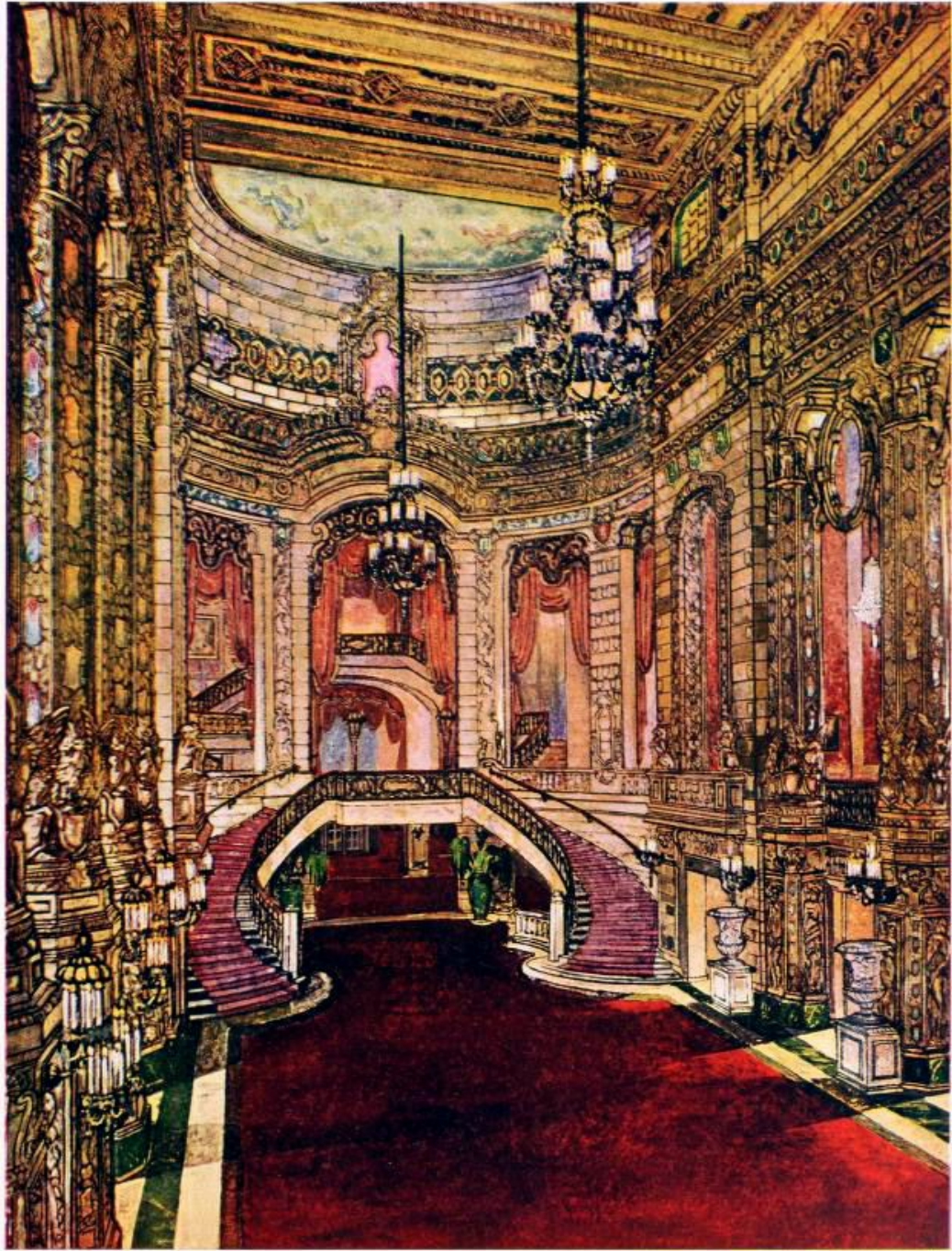
Organ Screen & Surrounds Oriental Theatre, Chicago



Color Drawing by H. A. C. Kinsler

GRAND LOBBY OF THE MICHIGAN THEATRE, DETROIT
C. W. & GEO. L. RAPP, ARCHITECTS

Grand Lobby of the Michigan Theatre, Detroit



Color drawing by A. C. Rondeletti

GRAND STAIRS AND LOBBY AS SEEN FROM THE MUSIC ROOM, UPTOWN THEATRE, CHICAGO
C. W. & GEO. L. RAPP, ARCHITECTS

Grand Stairs & Lobby Uptown Theatre, Chicago



AUDITORIUM OF THE UPTOWN THEATRE, CHICAGO, SHOWING MEZZANINE, LOGES AND BALCONY
C. W. & GEO. L. RAFF, ARCHITECTS

Auditorium showing Mezzanine Loges & Balcony, Uptown Theatre, Chicago

Ultra Modern Theatres

(Continued)

THE achievements of C. W. and George L. Rapp were featured in a past issue of Theatre Building & Equipment BUYERS GUIDE. Pictorial emphasis was placed on the theatres which gave this firm of architects an international reputation. There was the Chicago Theatre in the city of the same name, the first of the truly great picture houses, and today the same sensation that it was the day it was opened. The majestic Tivoli in Chicago, carrying with it the inspiration of the famous palace of Versailles, still remains a masterpiece of architecture. Then that great giant of residential Chicago—the Uptown—46,000 square feet of brilliant Spanish treatment which will survive as one of the wonders of the second city for scores of years. The B. F. Keith Theatre in Cleveland, magnetic and atmospheric, endowed with a charm that will be everlasting. We were thrilled with that splendid tribute to the master showman of the big tops, the Al Ringling Memorial Theatre at Baraboo, Wisconsin, which will ever be a perfect model for our smaller communities. The Capitol, Davenport, Iowa; the Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; the Capitol, St. Paul, Minnesota; the Tivoli, Chattanooga, Tennessee, to name but a few, are still secure in today's list of the foremost houses.

New Work More Amazing

To excel such a record seems impossible, and yet, the accomplishments of the firm during the year drawing to a close have set a new high standard. Aside from the Paramount, Rapp & Rapp have invaded new metropolitan centers with startling innovations and have further acquitted themselves with distinction.

Any mention of the activities of C. W. and George L. Rapp would be incomplete without proper credit being given to their associates, Lieberman & Hein, engineers, also situated at 190 N. State St., Chicago. This firm of engineers has distinguished itself in the field of theatre building, and has contributed in great part to the success attained in Rapp & Rapp houses.

Ranking with the country's finest playhouses is the new \$5,500,000 Ambassador Theatre and office building in St. Louis, which climaxes the remarkable career of Skouras Brothers, those three great exhibitor-owners, who entered the field with a \$1,500 investment and provided the business with one of its most compelling romances.

The theatre occupies the first six floors of the Ambassador building, that section alone being figured to cost approximately \$3,750,000.

The lower floors of the exterior of the building are finished in marble and ornamental terra cotta, graduating into a buff brick that is surmounted at the seventeenth floor by an elaborate cornice.

The theatre seats 3,000 persons on the first floor and balcony. It is a one-price house, the seats in the balcony being as desirable as those on the first floor.

The ticket lobby is finished in marble with a golden ceiling and opens into the grand lobby running parallel to Seventh Street and rising to a height of forty feet.

From the floor of Travertine marble rise large piers to support the curved ceiling. These piers are beautifully modeled in plaster relief and decorated in buff, a light green gold and a striking shade of red, a color scheme that is ornately carried out in the ceiling.

At the far end of the lobby rises the grand staircase flanked on either side by rails of beaten bronze and finished in marble. It carries the visitor to the second floor level of the lobby around which lies the grand promenade. Luxurious furniture and richly colored draperies and tapestries provide a restful atmosphere here.

Two huge chandeliers suspended from the ceiling of the lobby dominate this portion of the theatre and overshadow in beauty the ornamental fixtures outside the auditorium. They are essentially Spanish Renaissance in spirit of design, expressing in their rich black and gold finish the Moorish influence in Spanish art.

This grand promenade opens directly into the mezzanine loge. Ramps also provide an easy entrance to the balcony. The entrance to the main floor is via the grand foyer, especially decorated, carpeted with a hand tufted rug imported from Europe. It is furnished with comfortable chairs.

The auditorium decorations express the baroque and dazzling spirit of the Spanish Renaissance. The architects, however, did not confine themselves to any particular style of Spanish construction art, but endeavored to symbolize in the unusual coloring and design the spirit of a Spanish festival such as were held in the early fifteenth century. Accordingly the walls have been ornamented with brilliant and bizarre tones that convey the Spanish atmosphere. Throughout the auditorium statues have been placed in niches and figures have been raised in bold relief to express the gaiety of a carnival procession.

But the most distinctive of the decorative features of this truly wonderful picture palace is the hanging ceiling, which makes it appear that the roof has been suspended in the air. This novelty was achieved by cutting a series of eleven domes in the roof.

Above the stage is the first of this series—a group of three domes finished in silverleaf and so lighted as to resemble a brilliant sunburst. In the center is the second unit, a massive dome also done in silverleaf but lighted in deep blue and colored to give the effect of fleecy clouds.

Seven more domes, also done in silverleaf and lighted with the rays of numerous concealed blue lamps, complete the effect of the open sky top above the mezzanine in the rear of the theatre. The ornamental lighting fixtures of the auditorium are in Oriental design. There are also various colorful decorations on the ceiling and walls.

The proscenium opening of the stage is 50 feet wide and 45 feet high. It is the largest in the city and will permit the staging of any type of production. The stage equipment is unsurpassed. The curtains are of rich velvet, silk and velour.

Backstage there has been provided modern dressing rooms for the stage artists and musicians, all equipped with modern furniture, draperies and private baths. An elevator takes the performers to their dressing rooms where by private telephone they are called for their act. There is a reception room where artists may meet their guests. Space is also provided in the basement for animals.

Shea's Buffalo Theatre

Comparing in gorgeousness of decoration, completeness of equipment and conveniences for patrons with the finest theatres of the capitals of the world, Shea's Buffalo Theatre has been opened to an expectant public which now is singing its praises on all sides. The new Buffalo is the climax of a half century of accomplishment in the theatre world by Michael Shea, who, when only 23 years old, launched on his first venture, the Shea Music Hall in the old Arcade building on Clinton Street. Today, Mr. Shea is nearing the age of three score and ten, but still "on the job," continuing to direct the operation of his chain of Buffalo houses under the new Publix-Shea organization known as the Shea Operating Company.



UNIQUE PROSCENIUM AND ORGAN SCREEN TREATMENT, NEW AMBASSADOR THEATRE, ST. LOUIS
C. W. & Geo. L. Rapp, Architects



SPACIOUS AND DECORATIVE STAIRWAY AT THE END OF GRAND FOYER, AMBASSADOR THEATRE, ST. LOUIS
C. W. & Geo. L. Rapp, Architects

The Shea Buffalo, built in exactly one year, cost close to \$2,000,000 and has a seating capacity of 4,000. The entrance, which is on Main Street, is an impressive one. It rises to a height of 100 feet. A mammoth marquee is faced with three interchangeable attraction signs. Directly above the marquee opens a plate glass and ornamental iron window, surmounted by a 40-foot parapet in Gothic design and constructed of terra cotta, elaborately decorated.

Entering a vestibule, 22 by 30 feet, from Main Street, through five double bronze doors one comes to a ticket office placed in the center, which is of marble, six feet by five feet and seven feet high. Five more bronze and leaded glass doors lead from the vestibule into the lobby which is 80 feet long and 30 feet wide. Here one comes upon a spectacular scene of marble walls and pillars, including immense mirrors of panelled glass which reflect the graceful arches opposite them. These mirrors are hung with red and gold curtains. On the walls are beautiful candelabra, while from the ceiling hang four crystal chandeliers, costing many thousands of dollars.

Large arches extend up each side of the lobby. A grand marble staircase leads from the right end of the lobby to the mezzanine promenade which runs around the rear and along the south and front sides of the lobby. This promenade is artistically furnished, laid with rich rugs, and has a lounge at the front over the space occupied on the ground floor by the ticket vestibule. Here is placed a grand piano, divans and large easy chairs. From this promenade the patron looks down into the lobby. From the front lounge one looks through the large front arched window into Main Street. This window is decorated on the inside with draperies in gold and crimson silk.

From the lobby, one enters the foyer which extends along the entire length of the auditorium to Pearl Street, where there is another entrance. This foyer is 22 feet wide and 90 feet long. It is separated from the auditorium by glass doors and, like the rest of the house, is strikingly and elaborately furnished.

French Renaissance Decorations

The first impression is that of a harmonious mass of gold, pink and blue. The eye notes the elaborately decorated proscenium arch which has a height of 50 feet. The stage has an opening 66 feet wide. It is 32 feet deep. The balcony seats 1,600.

There are eleven rows of loge seats in the front of the balcony. There are three mammoth arches at each side of the balcony, each of which has a large mirror at the top and a fire exit at the bottom. A large crystal chandelier hangs from the ceiling in front of each arch window.

At the center of the top of the auditorium is an immense dome, indirectly lighted. This dome is 50 feet north and south by 70 feet east and west. The total distance from the top of the dome to the orchestra floor is 89 feet, a distance equal to the height of the average seven-story office building.

In front of this dome is a smaller, rectangular-shaped dome, in which are concealed ten floodlights for the stage.

The whole interior decoration of the theatre is French Renaissance in character, approaching most nearly to the Louis XIV styles, but with a modern and American adaptation. The ceiling is covered with an infinite variety of interlacing woodwork designs on curving panels, painted in the dominant golds, pinks and blues, with many variations of these shades.

Ten great hanging lamps in variegated glass provide light at the sides, together with a number of lights of similar glass set in plaques on the walls. At the front the proscenium arch is set off by indirect lights all around.

The orchestra is arranged on a special platform which can be lowered to the basement, and raised to the stage level at the time of the overture. The organ console, similarly arranged, is on a separate elevating unit.

Opportunities for originality in stage fittings are some-

what limited, but the stage of the Shea Buffalo offers something quite different. The fire curtain in the 66-foot wide proscenium, is raised at the opening of the house in the morning, and only the drop of red silk is visible. This curtain alone weighs 800 pounds. When this is parted, the real novelty of this stage is visible in the form of enormous gilded gates weighing 1,600 pounds, which slowly fold back. The opening of the portal is 42 by 26 feet, and forms the stage proper. The sounding board is attached to this and extends 42 feet into the air, making the acoustics practically faultless.

Chicago's New Palace

October saw the opening of another great Rapp creation, the new Palace Theatre, Chicago, the pride of the entire Orpheum circuit. It is the central unit of the huge Eitel block, with the new Bismarck hotel on the west and the Metropolitan office building on the east.

An idea of the furore excited by this magnificent play-house is best told in a review by Frederick Donaghey, dramatic critic of the *Chicago Tribune*. He said, in part:

"I think the new Palace is the most nearly ideal variety-theatre I've yet seen, in this country or abroad. It is, as a place wherein to look on and listen in as a miscellaneous and elastic bill is run off, a better and a lovelier theatre than London's best, the spacious Coliseum, which, until I saw the new Palace the other day, has for years stood in my esteem as the variety-theatre of the world.

"The period scheme is Louis XIV and Louis XVI, freely treated with regard for the utilities and the uses of a theatre made to hold more than 2,500 persons. And this great 'capacity,' as the showmen call it, has been achieved without a sense of vastness in the auditorium: the proportions have been so gauged that the effect from the last row of the main floor is actually one of what some showmen like to speak of as 'intimacy.' The foyer, the lobby, and the promenades are features the like of which are in possession of no other theatre I've seen in the United States."

The Oriental at Chicago

Chicago's most unique and original theatre, the Oriental, is located in the new \$5,000,000 United Masonic Temple, the most magnificent structure of its kind in the world.

The theatre, a flawless example of the best in Oriental art, including the entresol floor and balcony, has a capacity of about 4,000 seats. It is operated by Balaban & Katz, the pre-eminent showmen of all America.

The exterior of the entrance is unusually interesting with the East Indian ornament and grotesques around the large window over the sheltering canopy, giving the effect of a grand triumphal arch—the entrance to the Orient.

The interior far surpasses anything heretofore attempted for a place of amusement of this character. It is an educational treat in itself as a work of art to study and examine the array of sculptured detail throughout the theatre.

The entrance or grand lobby is elaborately treated with marble columns and walls extending 40 feet high and enriched with ornamental plaster panels, mosaic glass niches, and overhead balconies in the architecture of the Far Eastern Orient, and brilliantly illuminated with special lighting effects. Imported mosaic glass-lined niches in the upper side wall bays of this lobby are of most interesting original Indian design, depicting dancers of the Orient and are examples of the highest class of mosaic art.

The massive ceiling beams and enclosing ceiling panels and coffers are richly ornamented on all surfaces with a multitude of varying Oriental detail. The main cornice frieze is formed with a series of recessed niches in which are located concealed electric lights.

Marble stairs lead up from either side of this lobby to the entresol foyer above, meeting on and forming a balcony at the north end of the lobby. Another balcony occurs at the front or opposite end of the grand lobby over the ticket lobby. Above the north balcony is another group of Oriental balconies on landings leading to the upper



GRAND LOBBY VIEWED FROM THE MUSIC ROOM, SHEA'S NEW BUFFALO THEATRE, BUFFALO

C. W. & Geo. L. Rapp, Architects



VIEW OF THE PROSCENIUM, SHOWING EFFECTIVE PICTURE SETTING AND ELEVATED ORCHESTRA PIT, SHEA'S BUFFALO THEATRE, BUFFALO

C. W. & Geo. L. Rapp, Architects



ELABORATE DECORATIVE PROSCENIUM AND ORGAN NICHE TREATMENT AS SEEN FROM THE BALCONY, ORIENTAL THEATRE, CHICAGO
C. W. & Geo. L. Barr, Architects



GRAND FOYER, ORIENTAL THEATRE, CHICAGO. THE CHARM OF THE FAR EAST EXEMPLIFIED IN DECORATIONS AND FURNISHINGS
C. W. & Geo. L. Barr, Architects



THE CENTRAL WALL TREATMENT ABOVE THE BALCONY IS UNIQUE IN DECORATION AND LIGHTING EFFECTS, ORIENTAL THEATRE, CHICAGO
C. W. & Geo. L. Barr, Architects

balcony foyer, and on this upper foyer is still another balcony from which high level the public can look down upon this beautiful and awe-inspiring spectacle with the feeling that they are in the Far East and overlooking the nave of an ancient Oriental temple or palace.

The grand foyer at the rear of the auditorium extends up through the entresol foyer above with balustrade around the wall opening on the upper foyer from which interesting views of the foyer below are obtained. The walls in this grand foyer are embellished with marble wainscot, marble columns, Oriental ornamented panels, and friezes. Mosaic mural scenes of original Oriental fetes and gala festivities allegorically displaying the life, pastimes and history of the Far East decorate the walls of this foyer.

The architectural treatment of the auditorium is beyond description with its intricacies of Oriental magnificence, grotesques, dancers and Indian sculptured animal figures. The side walls of the auditorium are resplendent with lights back of colored glass around ornate canopied shrine-like niches. The proscenium arch, including the organ screens, is extremely well developed and will be a subject for much study to absorb the splendor of the details. Of special interest are four prancing grotesque horses bracketed out 25 feet long on each side of the proscenium arch supporting the ceiling above the organ screen. Figures or statues of various Oriental entertainers and magicians adorn numerous niches and panels in the auditorium. The front of the entresol balcony is cleverly illuminated with concealed lights. The ceiling of the auditorium is also of much interest with its Oriental treatment. The concealed lighting effects on the wall and ceiling enhance and display the ornamentation to best advantage.

The entire conception will recall the famous pageant of the East Indian Durbar, which is the most notable and most theatrical presentation of all India. The glorious procession with all its dazzling color and splendor is portrayed in this magnificent work of art and architecture. A number of the architectural motifs are inspirations from the famous palaces, temples and ancient edifices of the Orient, including the Delhi, Bijapur, Agra, Almedabad, Ajmere and Akbar of East India.

The furnishings and decorations throughout are executed to accentuate the various hues and colors of Oriental splendor and richness, exemplifying the actual conditions, customs and life of the East.

The orchestra pit is of the movable or disappearing type, providing the audience a wonderful spectacle, with the orchestra dressed in Eastern costumes and their unique Oriental instruments. The general personnel, ushers and maids within this wonderful place of amusement are dressed in the costumes and styles of old Far Eastern magnificence and grandeur.

The Michigan at Detroit

Detroit now takes its place among the leaders of the world in theatredom, thanks to the new Michigan Theatre, designed by Rapp & Rapp, which opened its doors in late August.

The new motion picture palace represents the zenith of combined resources and experience of Balaban & Katz of Chicago and the Kunsky Enterprises of Detroit.

As many authorities have said, Rapp & Rapp, architects for all Balaban & Katz theatres, have given their finest work here. There are no "mistakes" in the theatre, either in construction, color scheme or decoration. It took nearly two years to build the Michigan theatre, which is located on Bagley Avenue off Grand Circus Park, a neighborhood that until recently was the least desirable part of Detroit, but which now is part of Detroit's better downtown business section. It represents the fulfillment of the first unit of a \$75,000,000 development program by a syndicate of leading Detroit financiers, who expect to anchor Detroit's business district which has "floated" from Cadillac Square, to half a dozen locations.

The Michigan Theatre is built in connection with a 12-story office building, the whole of which is of a very



LOFTY AND SPACIOUS FOYER AT THE REAR OF ORCHESTRA AND MEZZANINE FLOOR, NORSHORE THEATRE, CHICAGO
C. W. & Geo. L. Rapp, Architects



VIEW FROM BALCONY AT TOP OF MAIN STAIRWAY OVERLOOKING GRAND LOBBY, NORSHORE THEATRE, CHICAGO
C. W. & Geo. L. Rapp, Architects



MICHIGAN THEATRE, DETROIT, SHOWING AUDITORIUM SIDE WALL AND ORGAN SCREEN TREATMENT
C. W. & Geo. L. Rarr, Architects

dignified class of architecture of terra cotta, granite and brick.

One enters this palace of pictures into a marble vestibule with fountains, statuary and mirrors. From this vestibule one is received into the grand lobby which is 60 feet wide running back to a distance of 100 feet. This grand lobby, rising to a height of 60 feet, is surrounded by magnificent marble columns, enclosing a number of floors or foyers from which one can step onto myriads of small balconies. Surmounting the entire space is a large vaulted ceiling of intricate design of plaster and paintings. Large and elaborate crystal chandeliers hang from the ceiling, giving a truly magnificent effect.

From this great hall one enters the foyer, which unlike many theatres, is large and spacious and full of interesting features. From the mezzanine foyer at the end of the grand lobby one ascends a stairway to the foyer above. This stairway is flanked on either side by palm trees, and has been well named the Avenue of Palms. There are other features on this mezzanine foyer, such as an exedra of four magnificent black and gold marble columns. On the opposite end from this exedra is a small foyer with an elliptical dome under which sets a terra cotta chariot beautifully modeled, imported from Europe.

Unlike many theatres, the Michigan has a great number of spacious stairways to avoid unnecessary walking from place to place in order to find access to different levels. The architects and designers have given great thought to the placing of stairways, and have arranged such in order to make stair climbing comfortable and inviting.

The main auditorium covers a distance of 140 x 200 feet, and is one of the largest built. The entire auditorium has been developed in the style of the French kings, notably Louis XIV and Louis XVI styles. However, the scale has been increased to such an extent as to impress upon the public the immensity and richness which was the desire of the owners and operators. The entire auditorium is surmounted by a dome having two systems of flood



VIEW OF THE PROSCENIUM ARCH AND ORGAN SCREEN IN THE MICHIGAN THEATRE, DETROIT
C. W. & Geo. L. Rarr, Architects



AUDITORIUM, SHOWING PROSCENIUM ARCH AND ORGAN SCREEN, RIALTO SQUARE THEATRE, JOLIET, ILL.
C. W. & Geo. L. Rapp, Architects



ELLIPTICAL GRAND LOBBY VIEWED FROM ENTRANCE LOBBY, RIALTO SQUARE THEATRE, JOLIET, ILL.
C. W. & Geo. L. Rapp, Architects

The entire auditorium is surrounded by a dome which is of silver tones, with an introduction of mother of pearl. The lighting effect of this dome is of variegated colors, recalling the rich Italian blue and the brilliant golden tones of the setting sun.

At the right and left side of the proscenium arch are boxes, in which is placed a mammoth organ. In front of this organ is the organ screen designed in such a way as to recall the old Roman altars of sacrifice. These altars are beautifully carved and enriched in gold plaster mosaics and alabaster. The proscenium arch is beautifully modeled in Roman-Italian detail, giving one the effect of a gateway or vista to wonderful pageants of theatricals, which have been contemplated.

The auditorium is approached from the main entrance by a grand lobby. The grand lobby has on each side, large arch openings, known as a colonnade through which one sees large mirrors flanked by wonderful drapes, giving the appearance of a wonderful vista on each side of the grand lobby. The floors of this lobby are of imported marble from Italy. Proceeding from this grand hall, one is greeted by a grand staircase. This staircase has been inspired from the gardens of the wonderful Villa d'Este, near Rome, and is enclosed by a Roman exedra. From this exedra are balconies over which are thrown wonderful banners, depicting the different periods of Roman-Italian architecture. The ceiling of this exedra is of Italian blue, the whole giving an effect of the interior of a wonderful Italian courtyard. At the left of this exedra one passes into the Raphael loggia. This loggia has been inspired by the products of Italian artists. Five mammoth panels are installed in this loggia on the wall. These panels have been inspired by the works of Raphael, and are modeled in relief in plaster and decorated in colors, conforming to the style of that great artist. The ceilings of this loggia are of Italian colors, rich in relief, giving the whole an effect of the Italian loggia. This loggia has five beautiful columns, the bases of which are ornamented in relief, depicting the different periods of art and architecture in the time of Raphael.

The main foyer is on a tremendous scale, the high ceilings giving the effect of a majestic approach to the auditorium; the walls of this mammoth foyer being covered with draperies imported from palaces of Italy. Statues of marble and bronze show reproductions of the famous artists of the Italian Renaissance.

Progressive Joliet, Illinois

Leading all other smaller cities of the country in theatrical architecture, is Joliet, Illinois, where C. W. and George L. Rapp have created the wonder Rialto Square Theatre as the parent house of the Great States Theatre Corporation.

Unusual property conditions have made it possible to incorporate in the Rialto Square Theatre grand lobbies of exceptional size and shape, which make this theatre one of unique arrangement and development.

One enters this new palace of varieties through a ticket lobby, into what is known as the inner lobby. This lobby is flanked on either side by large monumental mirrors, over which springs a vaulted ceiling, elaborately enriched in sculpture and paintings. From this lobby one is ushered into the grand lobby, which is oval in shape and is surmounted by a gorgeous dome supported by sixteen monumental marble columns.

The floors of these grand lobbies are of terrazzo, made of imported marbles, all inlaid in unique and original design.

The auditorium, although planned in general outline, similar to the Chicago and Tivoli theatres, in Chicago, has many unique and original features, which lend distinction and character to this one house. Special stress was given to the designing of the proscenium arch in which is portrayed the figure of Aphrodite rising from the sea and being viewed from either side by the Wise Men and other characters of this world-famous legend. This entire sounding board and proscenium arch has been developed



NATIONAL PRESS CLUB BUILDING, NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN WASHINGTON, D. C., WHICH WILL HOUSE THE NEW FOX THEATRE
 C. W. & Geo. L. Rapp, Architects



A STUDY IN DETAIL OF THE MEZZANINE FLOOR AND LOBBY IN THE TIVOLI THEATRE, CHICAGO
 C. W. & Geo. L. Rapp, Architects



THIRTY-STORY WITTEMANN BUILDING AND PUBLIC'S 1,500-SEAT BROOKLYN THEATRE, NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION
 C. W. & Geo. L. Rapp, Architects

in antique gold and colors in soft tones. The dome of the auditorium, unlike some of the other houses, has been enriched with an abundance of ornament and detail, which is enhanced a great deal by flood lighting effects. The general color scheme of the entire conception is what may be known as a Florentine color harmony.

The entire building, although not ranking as the greatest theatre in the country, can be classed as one of the best for its detail, its general conception, its color harmony, furnishings and design.

The exterior of the building is dominated by a large triumphal grand niche. This niche is mammoth in size and is decorated in polychrome terra cotta, the whole being flood lighted in different colors, creating a wonderful theatrical effect from the outside. This feature alone has become a nationally known detail and no doubt will influence a great many theatre exteriors in the future.

The Rialto Square, located as it is in a section of the country which draws on small cities, has proved the architect's argument that people throughout the country, whether from the small town or from the large city, are demanding the utmost in theatre design, an atmosphere of good taste and the best in theatrical presentation.

The accommodations provided in this theatre, such as lounge rooms, smoking rooms and parlors, are equal to the big time houses and an environment of welcome has been embodied in the designing and planning of these special features.

Spurred on by its monumental successes of the current year, the firm of C. W. and George L. Rapp is eagerly looking forward to 1927, which from present appearances, will again shatter all previous records. For the first time the firm will invade the great Northwest, designing veritable palaces for the theatregoers of Seattle and Portland, Pittsburgh, Portland, Maine, Omaha and other metropolitan centers are all waiting to be served by these great architects, and the motion picture world awaits with anticipation full details of these projects.

There are two outstanding activities now under way, however, that should be recounted.

The National Press Building

The National Press Club building brings Rapp & Rapp to the city of magnificent distances, and also shows the versatility of these famous designers. Although primarily theatre architects, the Rapps have by no means confined their efforts to that field. Witness the Trianon, Chicago, the largest ballroom in the world; the Hotels Windemere, the finest in residential Chicago; the stately Sigma Chi fraternity house at the University of Illinois; Akdar Shrine Temple, Tulsa, Oklahoma, and numerous skyscraper office buildings in a dozen cities.

The Press Club will be the largest office building in the nation's capital, and will serve as the national headquarters for the press of America, furnishing accommodations for all of the Washington correspondents, news services, publishers etc. The great edifice, directly opposite the New Willard Hotel, will cost \$10,000,000.

Washington's finest theatre, with 3,500 seats, will be included in this great monument to the Fourth Estate. It has been leased to the Fox Theatres Corporation for 35 years.

The Brooklyn Theatre

Rapp & Rapp have designed a most striking structure for erection at DeKalb Avenue and Flatbush Street in Brooklyn, N. Y. An office building of 30 stories will surround a 500-foot tower, the whole being designed in modern adaptation of the later Spanish Renaissance.

The building will enclose a theatre with a seating capacity of 4,500 and will be designed in the style of Old Spain, embodying the spirit of the Spanish carnivals and fetes, which so gloriously characterize the arts and beauties of that race. Features and novelties new to theatre architecture will be employed to further inspire the amusement-loving world.



ONE OF THE SPACIOUS UPSTAIRS LOBBIES, CHICAGO THEATRE, SHOWING TREATMENT OF ARCH CEILINGS
C. W. & Geo. L. Rapp, Architects



EXTERIOR OF CHICAGO THEATRE, SHOWING THE MAMMOTH SIGN VISIBLE FOR MILES NORTH AND SOUTH
C. W. & Geo. L. Rapp, Architects