

Royal Cobourg Theatre (later the Old Vic), London 1818.

THEATRE LIGHTING

Through the Ages

BRIAN ROBERTS



Lincoln Centre, New York (often called the New Metro). Opened 1966.
Architect: Harrison & Abramowitz.

CONTENTS

GENERAL INFORMATION

This listing is indicative only. It covers both legitimate and movie theatres. Names of theatres often changed when reconstructed or when the ownership changed. The dates shown are those attributed to when the theatre first opened.

THROUGH THE AGES Candlelight, Limelight, Gas Lighting, Electric Lighting

In page order

Royal Coburg Theatre (rebuilt becoming Old Vic), London: 1818, 1871

Lincoln Centre (The New Metro), New York City: 1966

Red Bull Theatre, London: 1672

Medieval Entertainment: 15th century

Limelight: 1874

Gas Lighting: 19th century

Theatre Royal, Leicester: 1864

Gas Regulations: 1864

Strode & Company: 1889

FEATURED THEATRES

In page and alphabetical order

Apollo Theatre, London: 1908

Avalon Movie Theatre, Los Angeles: 1929

Chicago Movie Theatre, Chicago: 1921

Coliseum Theatre, London: 1904

Covent Garden Royal Opera House, London: 1810, 1858

Criterion Theatre, London: 1872

Duke of York's Theatre, London: 1892

El Capitan Movie Theatre, Los Angeles: 1926

Haymarket Royal Theatre, London: 1823

Her Majesty's Theatre, London: 1897

Kings Theatre, Edinburgh: 1930

Loews Kings Movie Theatre, New York City: 1929

Los Angeles Movie Theatre, Los Angeles: 1921

Metropolitan Opera House, New York City: 1883

Old Vic Theatre, London: 1871

Orpheum Movie Theatre, Los Angeles: 1926

Palace Theatre (opened as The Royal English Opera House), London: 1891

Palace Music Hall, Manchester: 1913

Pantages Movie Theatre, Los Angeles: 1930

Palais Garnier (Paris Opera), Paris: 1875

Tivoli Movie Theatre, Chicago: 1921

Uptown Movie Theatre, Chicago: 1925

CANDLELIGHT



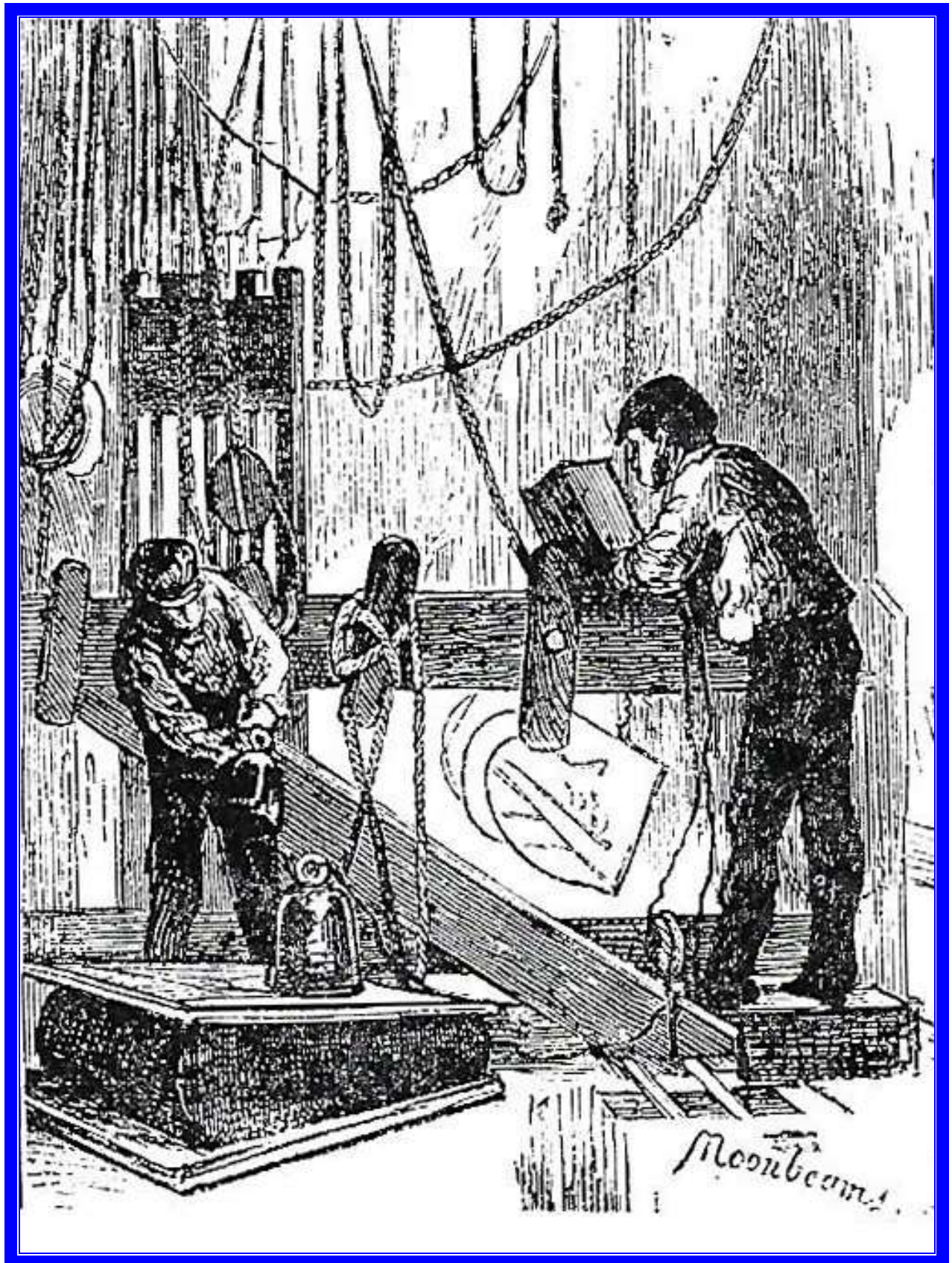
Red Bull Theatre, London with candle footlights and chandeliers on stage.
The Wits, or Sport on Sport, 1672 (*Theatre Lighting Before Electricity*).

CANDLELIGHT



Medieval entertainment by torch and candlelight, 15th century (*Princely Feasts and Festivals*).

LIMELIGHT



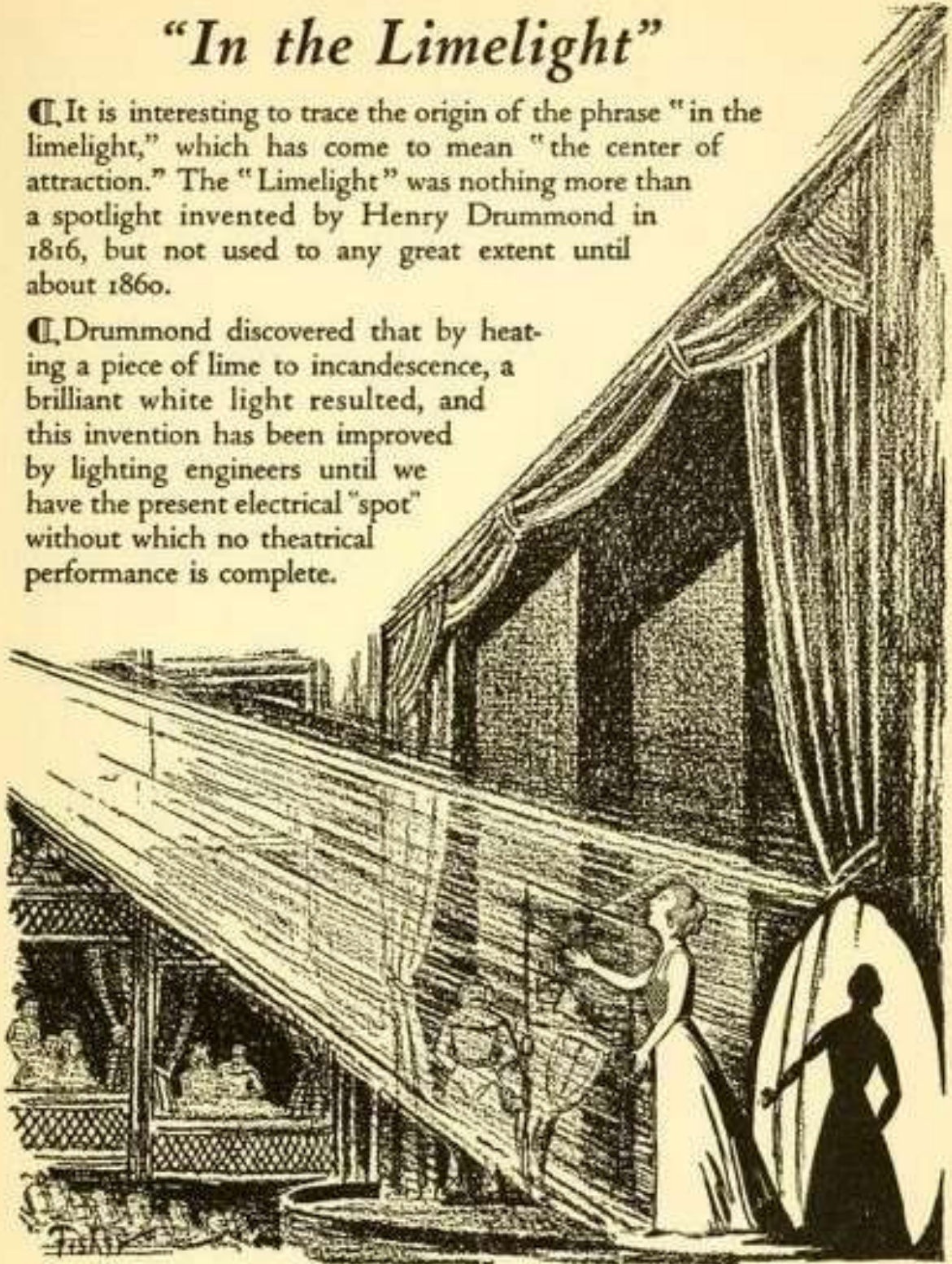
Limelight men operating in the fly-gallery (*The Graphic*, 1874).

LIMELIGHT

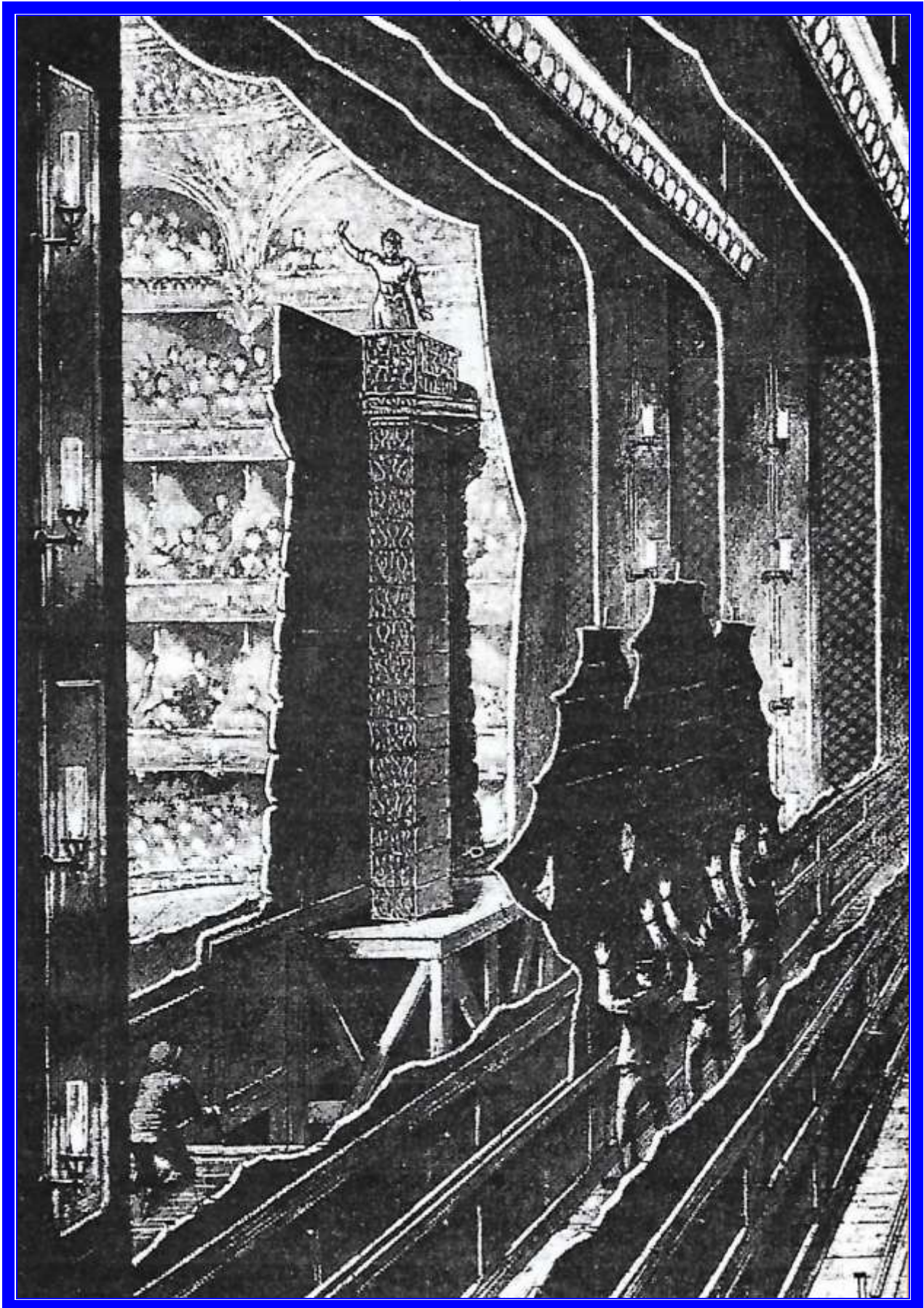
“In the Limelight”

It is interesting to trace the origin of the phrase “in the limelight,” which has come to mean “the center of attraction.” The “Limelight” was nothing more than a spotlight invented by Henry Drummond in 1816, but not used to any great extent until about 1860.

Drummond discovered that by heating a piece of lime to incandescence, a brilliant white light resulted, and this invention has been improved by lighting engineers until we have the present electrical “spot” without which no theatrical performance is complete.

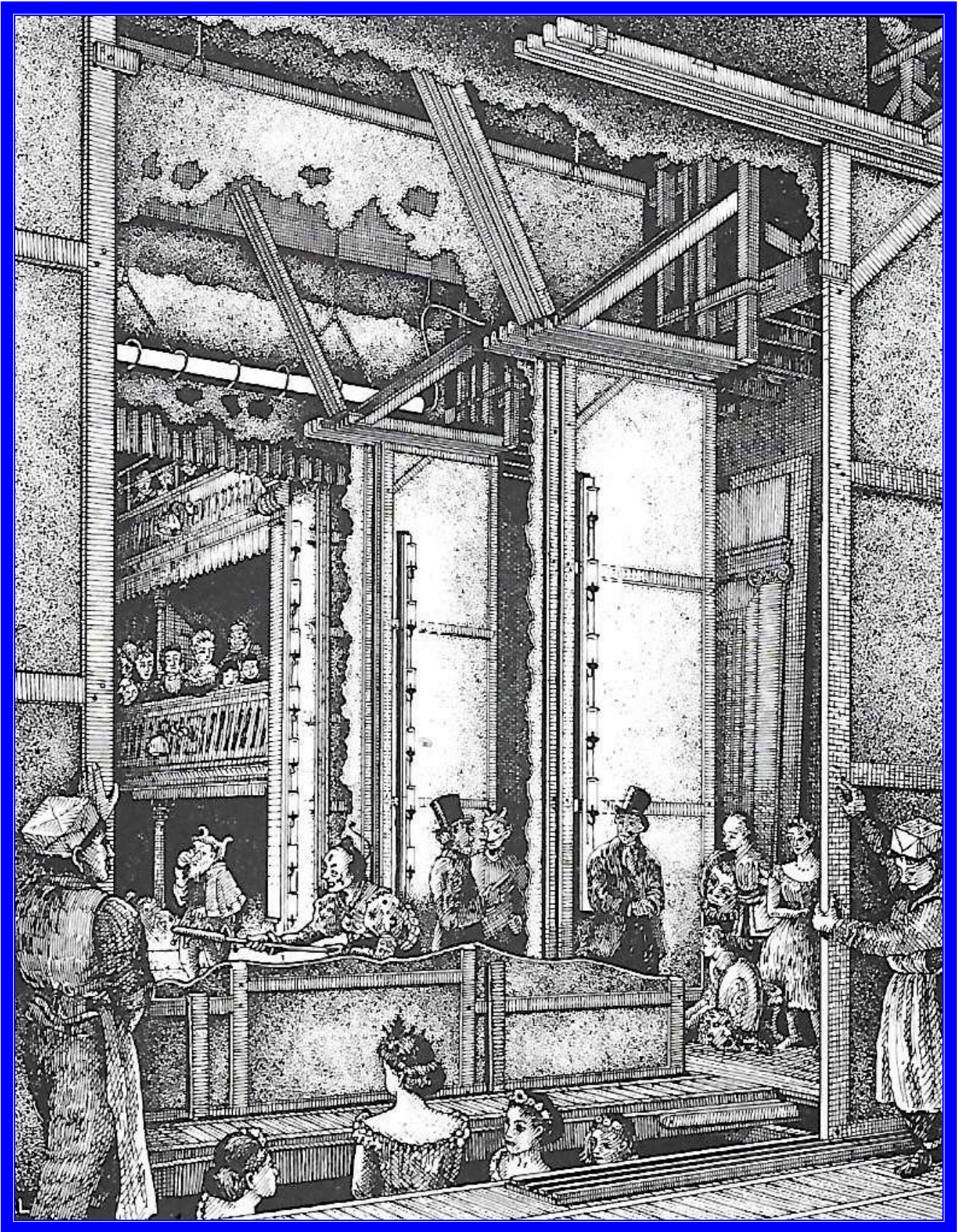


GAS LIGHTING



Offstage left, view of a gaslit stage (*Theatre Lighting before Electricity*).

GAS LIGHTING



Gas lighting backstage at The Theatre Royal, Leicester 1836.
(*The Development of the English Playhouse*).

GAS LIGHTING

REGULATIONS

FOR THE BETTER

Protection against Accidents by Fire at Theatres,

Licensed by the Lord Chamberlain.

I.

All fixed and ordinary GAS BURNERS to be furnished with efficient Guards. Moveable and occasional Lights to be, when possible, protected in the same manner, or put under charge of persons responsible for lighting, watching, and extinguishing them.

II.

The FLOATS to be protected by a Wire Guard. The first Ground-Line to be always without Gas, and unconnected with Gas, whether at the Wings or elsewhere. Sufficient space to be left between each Ground-Line, so as to lessen risk from accident to all persons standing or moving among such lines.

III.

The rows or lines of GAS BURNERS at Wings to commence Four Feet at least from the level of the Stage.

IV.

WET BLANKETS or RUGS, with BUCKETS or WATER-POTS to be always kept in the Wings; and attention to be directed to them by PLACARDS legibly printed or painted, and fixed immediately above them. As in Rule I., some person to be responsible for keeping the Blankets, Buckets, &c., ready for immediate use.

V.

These REGULATIONS to be always posted in some conspicuous place, so that all persons belonging to the Theatre may be acquainted with their contents; every Breach or Neglect of them, or any act of carelessness as regards Fire, to be punished by Fines or Dismissal by the Managers.

SYDNEY,

Lord Chamberlain.

Lord Chamberlain's Office,
St. James's Palace,

February 5, 1864.

Printed by Harrison and Sons, St. Martin's Lane.

GAS AND ELECTRIC LIGHTING

Advertisements.

3

NINE
Prize Medals.



NINE
Prize Medals.

STRODE & CO., Gas and Electric Lighting and Ventilating ENGINEERS.

MANUFACTURERS AND PATENTEES OF
THE VENTILATING SUN BURNER,
For Lighting and Ventilating Large Rooms, Theatres, &c.

MANUFACTURERS OF STAGE FITTINGS, &c.
THE IMPROVED FLASH BURNER
FOR INSTANTANEOUSLY LIGHTING BATTEN LIGHTS,
FLOAT LIGHTS, &c.

THEATRES LIGHTED BY OUR SUN BURNER.

Alhambra.	Edinburgh Theatre Royal.	Nottingham.
Aberdeen.	Gaiety, London.	Novelty.
Alexandra, Liverpool.	Gaiety, Dublin.	Opera House, Florence.
Adelphi.	Glasgow.	Opera House, Leicester.
Astley's.	Grafton, Dublin.	Portsmouth.
Bradford.	Haymarket.	Princess's.
Belfast.	Her Majesty's,	Prince of Wales', London.
Brighton.	Leamington.	Prince's, Manchester.
Bristol.	Londonderry.	Prince of Wales', Birmingham.
Cork.	Lyceum, London.	Plymouth.
Dumfries.	Lyceum, Edinboro'.	Queen's.
Eastbourne.	Northampton.	

Works and Offices—48, Osnaurgh-St., Regent's Park, N.W.

Show Rooms — 67, St. Paul's Churchyard, E.C.
188, Piccadilly, W.

} LONDON.

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APOLLO THEATRE, LONDON

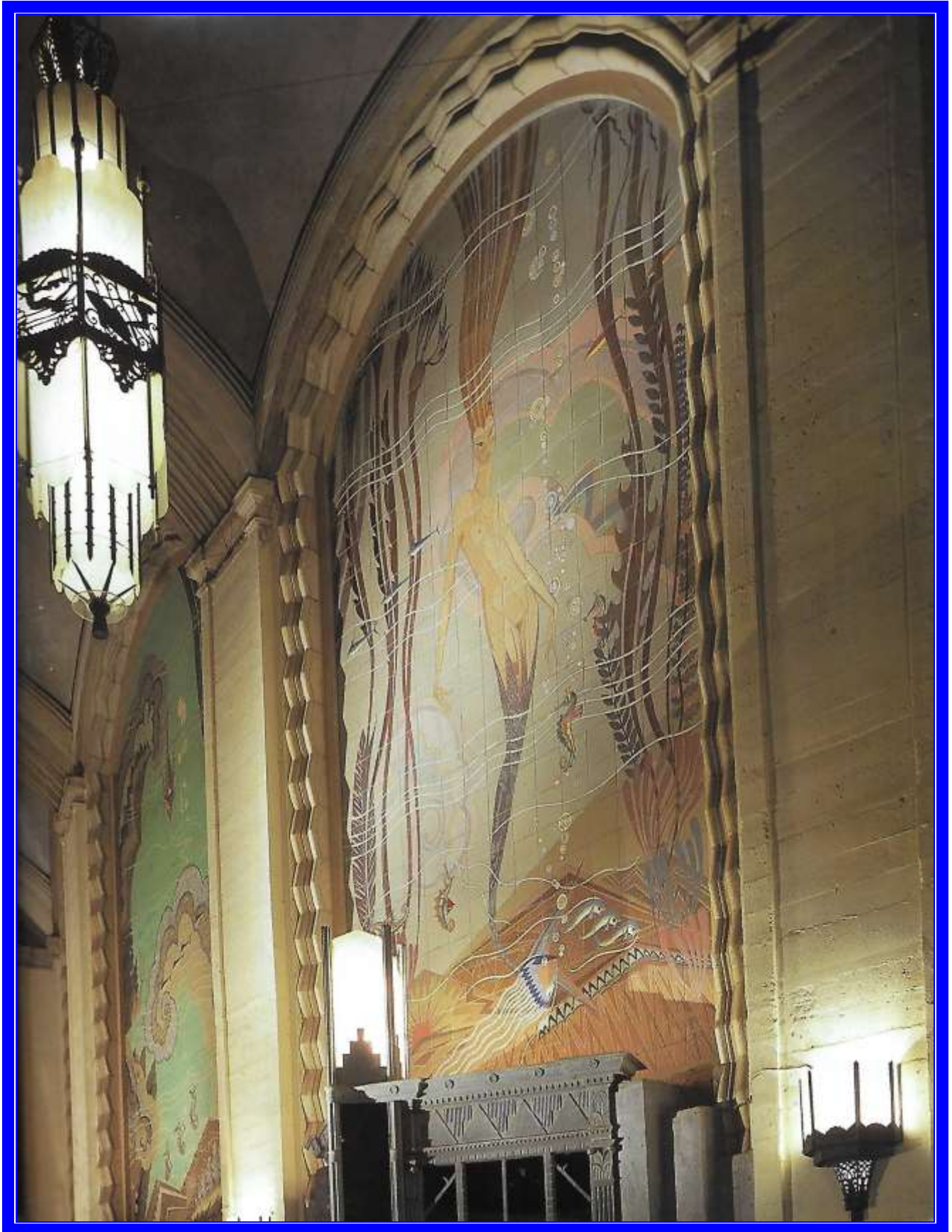


Apollo Theatre, London 1901 (*London's Great Theatres*).

APOLLO THEATRE, LONDON



AVALON THEATRE, LOS ANGELES



Avalon Theatre, Los Angeles, California 1929 (*The Last Remaining Seats*).

CHICAGO THEATRE, CHICAGO



Chicago Theatre, Chicago, Illinois, 1921.

COLISEUM THEATRE, LONDON



Opened as the London Coliseum 1904, present name from 1931.

COLISEUM THEATRE, LONDON



Coliseum, London's largest theatre and one of the first to have electric lighting.

COVENT GARDEN, LONDON



The second theatre lit by candles, 1810.



The third Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London 1858.

COVENT GARDEN, LONDON



The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London, stage lighting and controls (*London Theatres*).

CRITERION THEATRE, LONDON



Criterion Theatre, London, 1872, reconstructed 1883 and 1903.

CRITERION THEATRE, LONDON



Criterion Theatre, London, 1872, reconstructed 1883 and 1903.

DUKE OF YORK, LONDON



Auditorium of the Duke of York's Theatre (*photographs from Theatre's own website*).

EL CAPITAN, LOS ANGELES



Auditorium El Capitan, Hollywood opened 1926 (*American Theatres of Today*).



El Capitan auditorium.

HAYMARKET THEATRE, LONDON



Theatre Royal Haymarket, 2nd theatre 1821. Architect for exterior John Nash, interior reconstructed.



Theatre Royal Haymarket (*Access Entertainment*).

HAYMARKET THEATRE, LONDON



Auditorium Ceiling (*London Theatres*).



Theatre Royal Haymarket (*Theatre Crafts*).

HER MAJESTYS THEATRE, LONDON

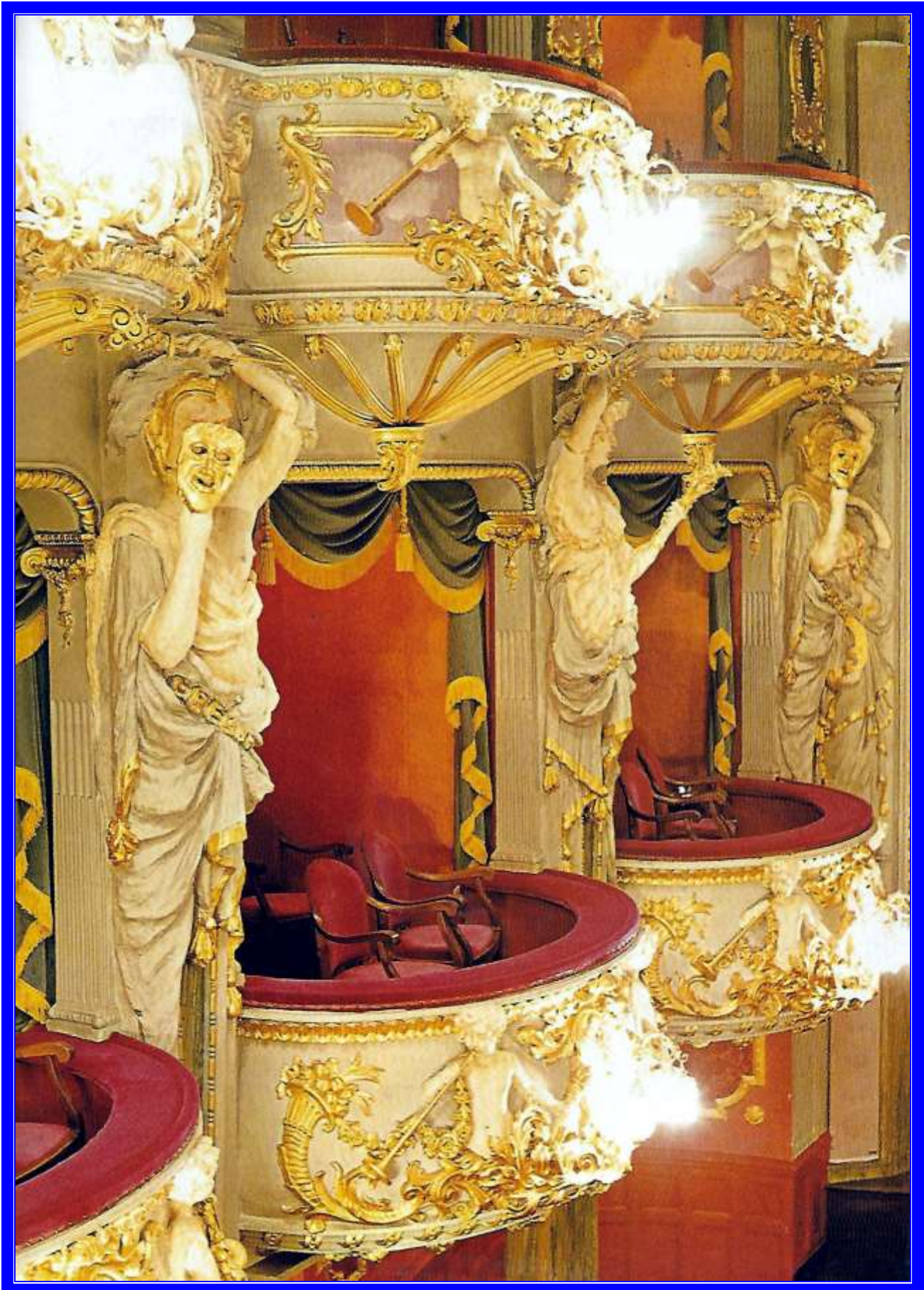


Her Majesty's Theatre view from stage.



Her Majesty's Theatre, London. Architect: C J Phipps.

KINGS THEATRE, EDINBURGH



King's Theatre, Edinburgh 1930 (*Victorian & Edwardian Theatres*).

LOEWS KINGS THEATRE, NEW YORK



Loew's Kings Theatre, Brooklyn, opened 1929. view of proscenium arch (*Kings Theatre*).



Loew's Kings Theatre, the inner lobby (*Kings Theatre*).
Architect: Edwin "Ted" Bullock of Rapp & Rapp.

LOEWS KINGS THEATRE, NEW YORK

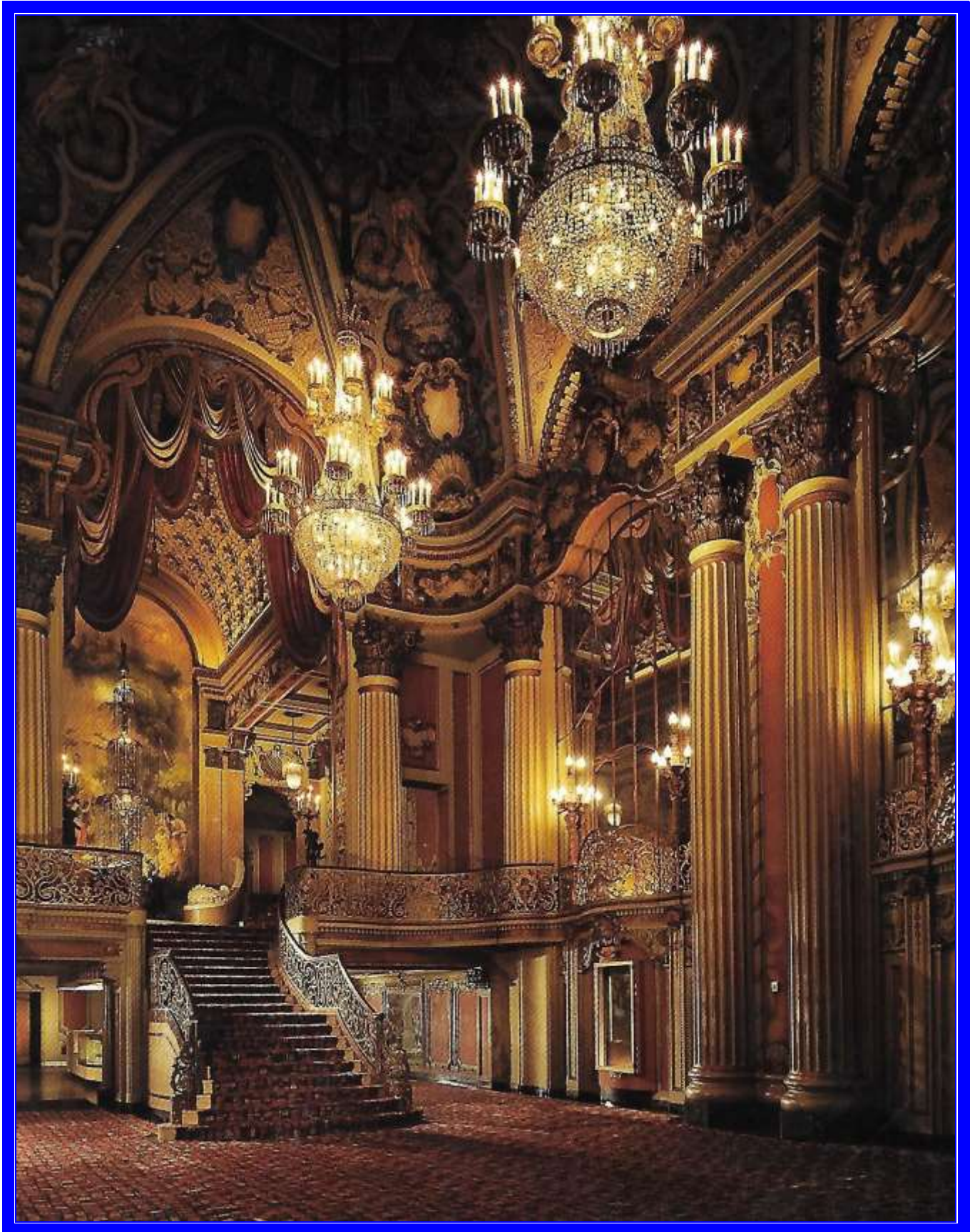


The restored Loew's Kings Theatre (*Kings Theatre*).



Loew's Kings Theatre, the auditorium restored (*Kings Theatre*).

LOS ANGELES THEATRE, LOS ANGELES



Los Angeles Theatre (*The Last Remaining Seats*), Chicago, Illinois, 1921.
Architect: S Charles Lee.

METROPOLITAN OPERA, NEW YORK



The Old Metro, New York in 1905. Built 1883. Architect: J Cleaveland Cady.



Concert in the Old Metro.

OLD VIC, LONDON



The Old Vic, London opened as The Royal Coburg Theatre in 1818.



The Old Vic auditorium.

OLD VIC, LONDON



Audience in the The Old Vic in 2016.

ORPHEUM, LOS ANGELES



Gala Premiere at the Orpheum Theatre, Los Angeles.



Orpheum Theatre, Los Angeles, opened 1926 (*Mike Hume's Historic Theatre Photographs*).

ORPHEUM, LOS ANGELES



Orpheum Theatre, Los Angeles. Architect: G Albert Lansburgh.

PALACE THEATRE, LONDON

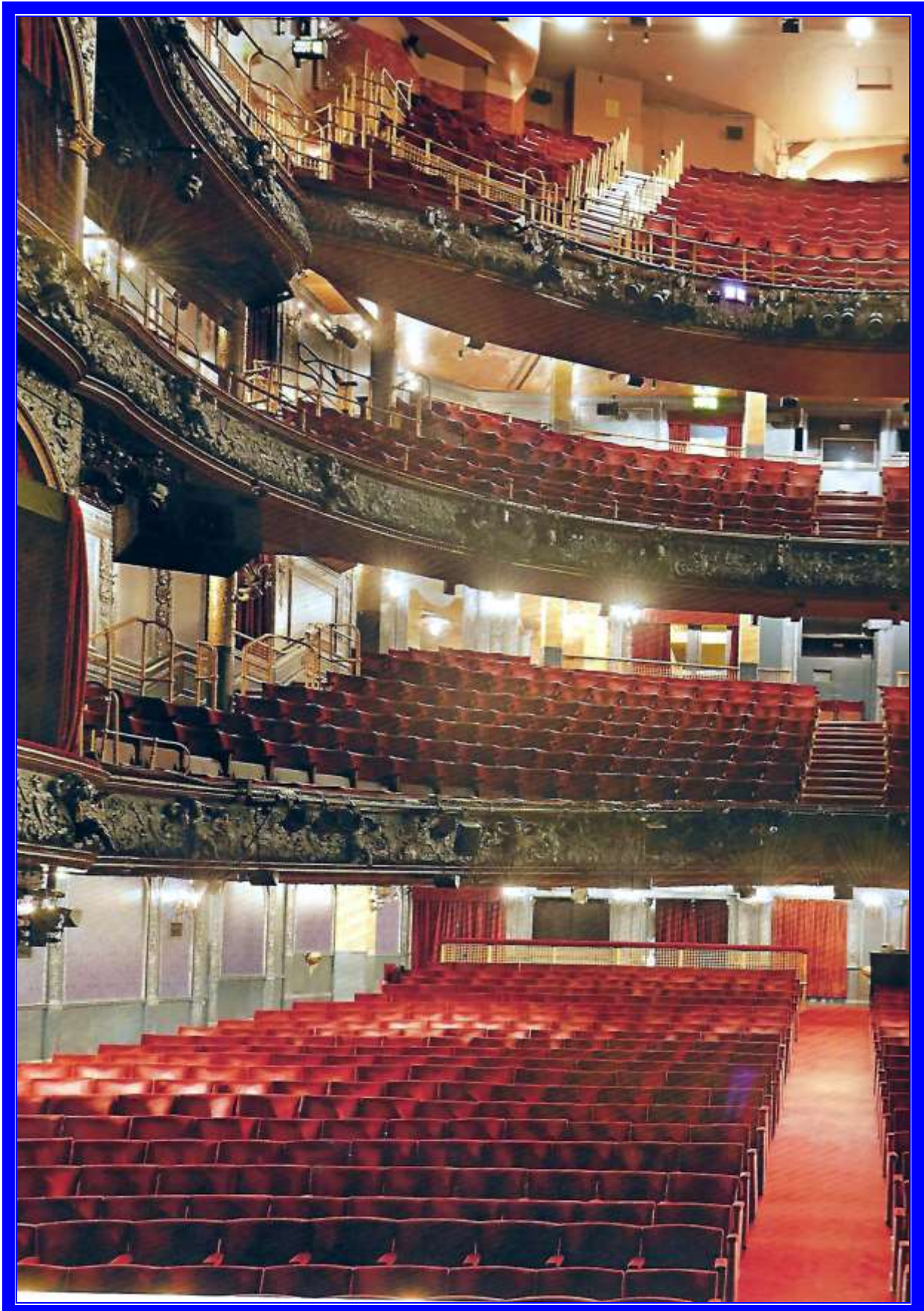


The Palace Theatre, Cambridge Circus, London. Opened as The Royal English Opera House 1891.
Architect: Frank Matcham.



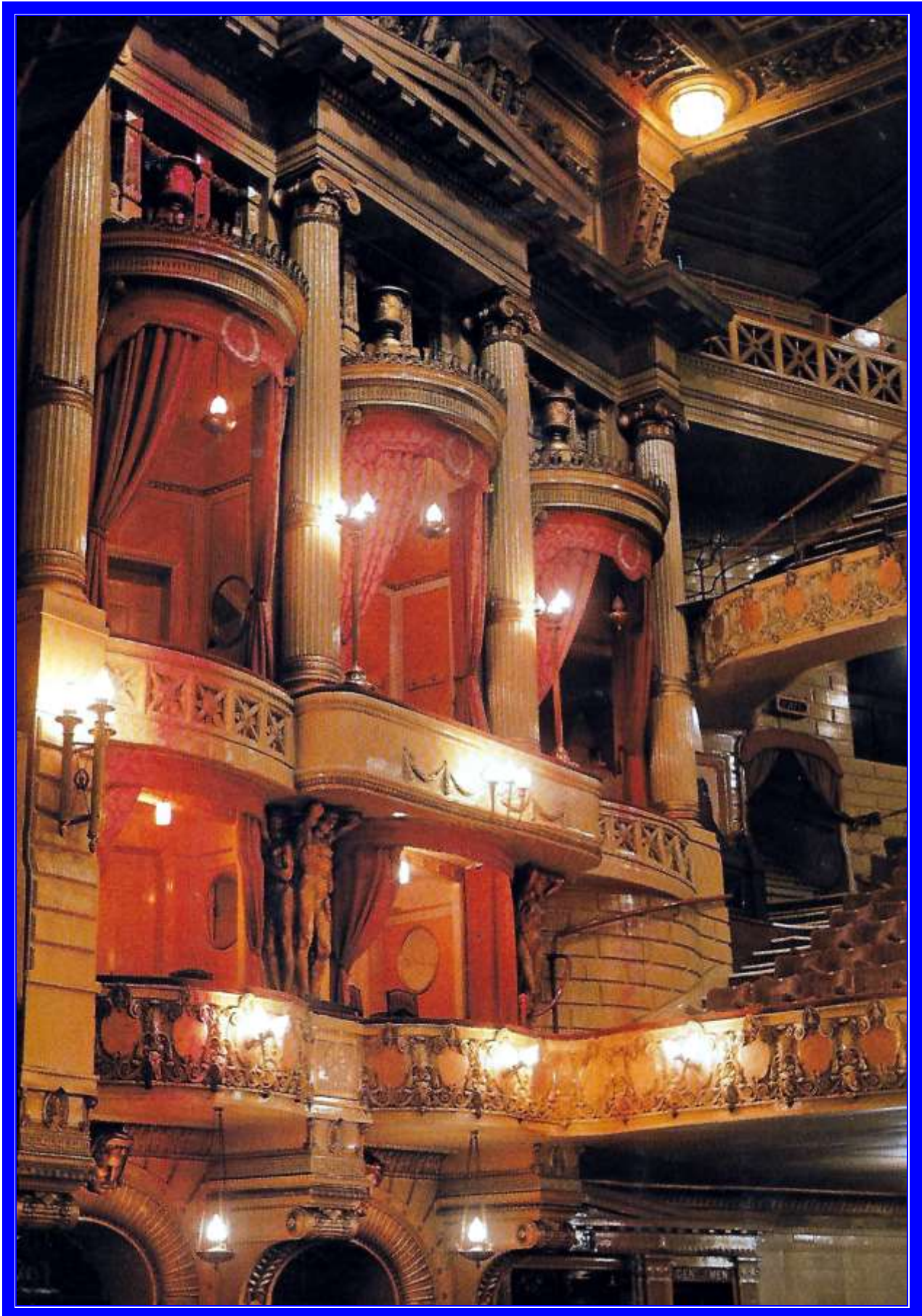
Palace Theatre, London (Nimaxtheatres.com).

PALACE THEATRE, LONDON



The auditorium commissioned by Richard D'Oyly Carte as the home of English opera.

PALACE MUSIC HALL, MANCHESTER



Palace Music Hall, Manchester 1913 (Victorian & Edwardian Theatres).

PANTAGES, LOS ANGELES

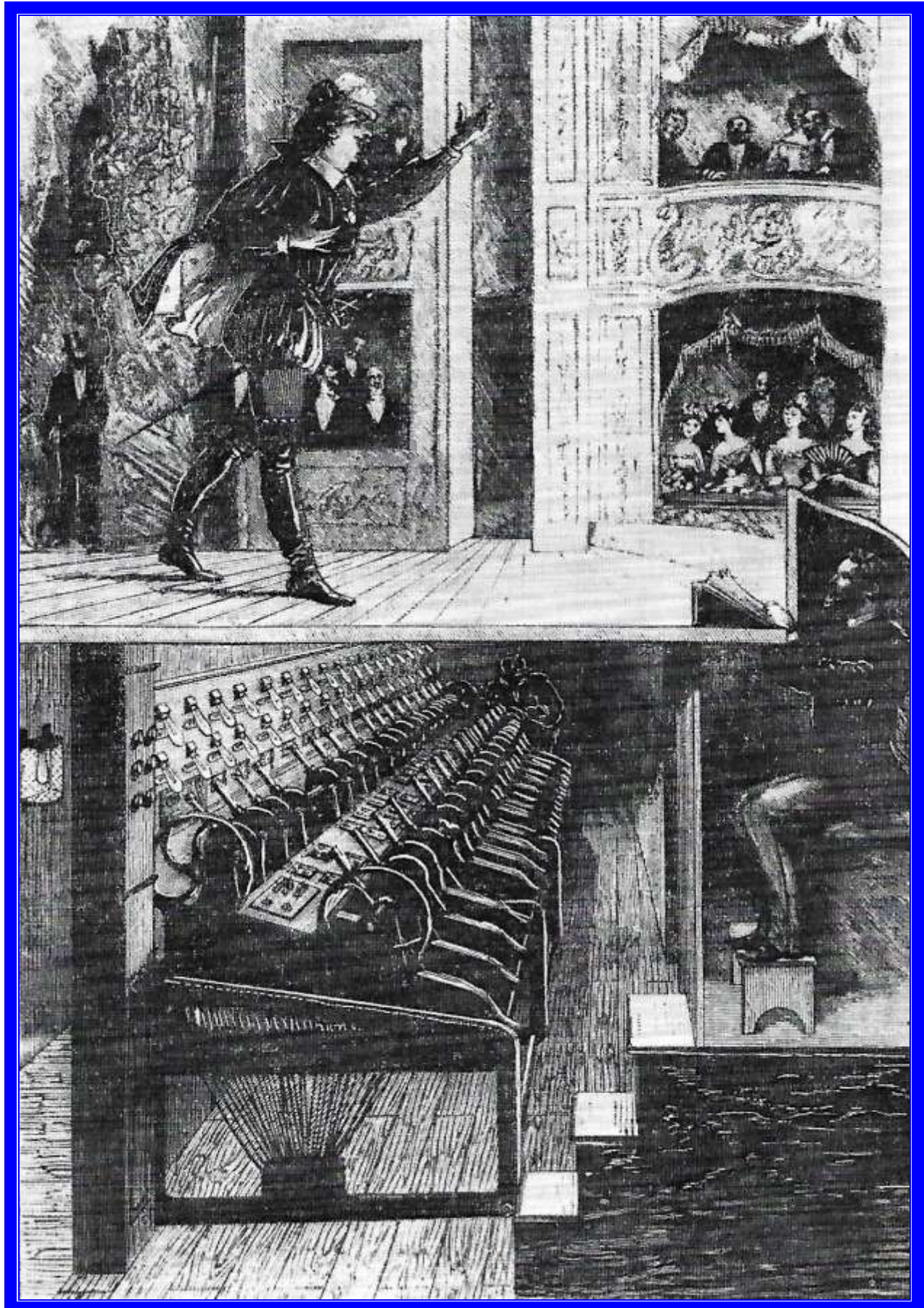


Pantages lobby 1930 (*Historic Theatre Photography*).



Auditorium ceiling lighting Pantages.

PALAIS GARNIER, PARIS

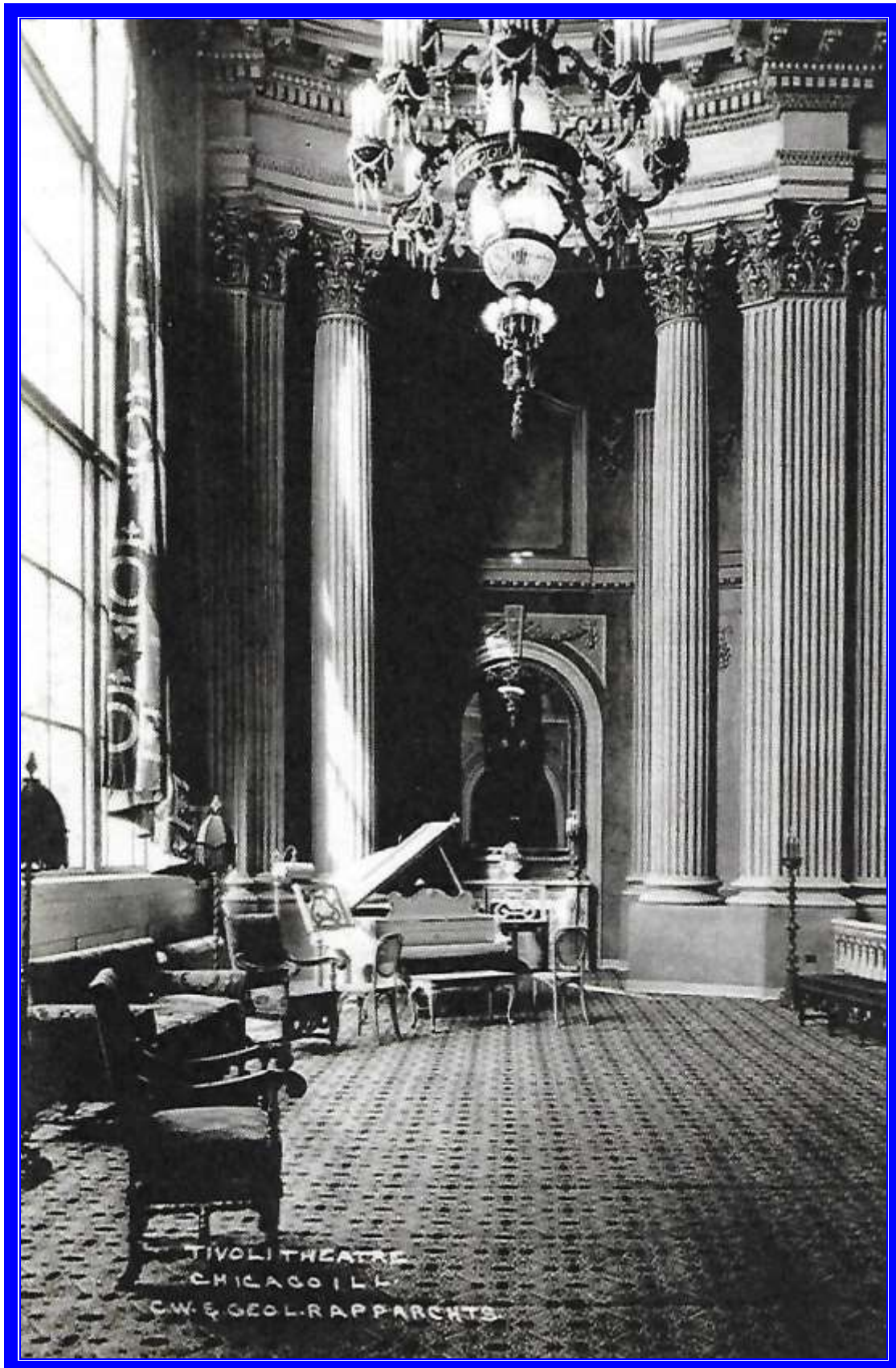


Inauguration of Paris Opera.

PALAIS GARNIER, PARIS



TIVOLI, CHICAGO



Tivoli Theatre's Music Room, Chicago 1921 (*Rapp & Rapp*).
The Grand Staircase and chandeliers (*Fine Art America*).

TIVOLI, CHICAGO



Tivoli Theatre's Grand Lobby, Chicago 1921 (*Rapp & Rapp*).

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