

# Aztec Theater, Soon to Open, Only One of Its Kind In U. S.

Follows the Lines of Ancient  
Temples and at Same  
Time Is Newest Thing in  
Country—De Luxe Ent-  
ertainment Promised.

NOT alone novelty but entertainment of the better sort is assured San Antonians when the Aztec Theater at Commerce and St. Mary's Streets opens its doors shortly. For months construction has been carried on in a structure apparently nothing more than an office building of a modern type.

And, that is why something more than the casual surprise awaits the theatergoers of this city. The builders have delved into those centuries, veiled by the past, to find something new, and new it is even in this day of the million dollar theaters embracing every convenience looking to the comfort and entertainment of its patrons. The Aztec has all of that and more. Its design follows closely the lines of the ancient Aztec temples found in the Old Mexico of an earlier day; and the many symbols forming so integral a part of the interior of the theater are as correct as painstaking search through Mexican archives would permit. The Aztecs were a colorful folk in the decoration of their temples. This coloring has been faithfully followed here, and which naturally will be heightened by the intricate scheme carried out in the lighting effects. So it is reasonably certain there is not another theater quite like it in the United States, and which at the same time creates a new "point of interest" for San

Antonians and visitors.

Theatrical architects say there are but few theaters in the entire world, in proportion to its size, that have the roominess of lobby and promenade space. There is enough room in the various corridors, lounging and retiring rooms for enough persons to stroll about to fill the auditorium. In addition to these spaces there will be a salon devoted to theater parties where tea or buffet luncheons may be served.

The main lobby is 25 by 75 feet with dim vaulted ceiling 65 feet above the floor. It was customary in the building of the Aztec temples to provide openings in the ceilings through which the smoke of the altars fires and sacrifices might filter toward the heavens. In the Aztec lobby this idea has been utilized and through three distance shafts in the ceiling one may glimpse the star-filled sky above.

Of course there are not actual openings in the roof but the art of decorating and the lighting effect has produced the perfect illusion. By an unique electric effect it has been made possible to show fleeting clouds, and the moon's pale light streams through the openings throwing a splash of light full upon a sculptured figure of an ancient Aztec god of war.

Special furniture has been designed by the architects and some of the big hand carved walnut chairs and benches heavily upholstered will weigh as much as 600 pounds.

The retiring rooms for men and women are especially attractive. The entire height of the walls are covered with ancient tiles with sculptured figures introduced into them at intervals. In each room special furniture of Spanish design will be installed.

The auditorium has been especially designed to produce the utmost in comfort for the patrons while watching the performance. The upholstered chairs widely spaced and are the finest that could be bought. The seating capacity including the balcony will be nearly 3,000. Considering the large size an uncommonly intimate effect has been obtained.

The general architectural effect of the auditorium is that of a great open court or patio in an Aztec palace. The court is surrounded by walls approximately 33 feet high above which and overhead one may look into the midnight sky with its twinkling constellation of stars and drifting clouds.

The proscenium opening is treated as a great triumphal arch, the keystone in the center being sculptured to feature an Aztec sunburst. Some idea of the gigantic scale of the orna-

mental motifs in the play house may be gained when it is stated that the sunburst covered with gold leaf and especially lighted is about 20 feet in diameter. On each side of the proscenium are the great, highly decorated stone organ chambers, framed between huge carved stone walls, all of which will be especially lighted to provide focal points for the patrons' eyes between shows.

William Epstein, the managing director, feels sure that students of archaeology will find much interest in deciphering the sculptured photographs, hieroglyphics and statuary exact replicas of famous Aztec work now uncovered.

A complete system of heating and ventilation has been installed, including a refrigeration system for hot weather which will guarantee comfort to the patrons of the theater in the hottest weather.

A large pipe organ, built specially for the Aztec Theater by the Robert Morton Organ Company of San Francisco, has been installed at a cost of \$50,000, and is equipped with all the latest orchestral effects that are required in modern photoplay theaters.

Mr. Epstein has not announced the form of entertainment he is going to offer the theatergoers of this city but says it will be bigger and of a different sort than seen heretofore.

Mr. Epstein, who sponsored the Commerce Realty Company, and associated with him are such widely known business men as Jessie and Henry Oppenheimer, both members of the banking firm of D. and A. Oppenheimer; also Albert Kronkosky, Ernest Steves, Morris Stern, Robert D. Barclay and Dr. Fred Oppenheimer.

Robert Kelly of the Edwood Company, local architects, and his associate, Robert Koenig, have worked and co-operated in every way possible in order to carry out the unique design of this theater.

Mr. Epstein said yesterday that the opening date would be announced shortly.