

THEATER IDEAL SOON TO OPEN

*City's New Showhouse Built
on Unique Specification*

*Many Innovations Apparent
With Completion Near*

*Screen Miniatures Show Film
in Lounges of House*

BY PHILIP K. SCHEUER

For a long time now, a practical business man of Los Angeles has cherished the idea of attending a motion-picture theater which would be exactly "right." None that he could think of, not even his own Tower, matched the one he saw in his mind. So he built it.

H. L. Gumbiner's idea, rising in steel, concrete and marble, is the Los Angeles Theater. Last week 600 artisans worked to make it complete for the premiere on the 30th inst. They started just five months ago, from plans drawn by Architect S. Charles Lee and thirty-three draftsmen working in two shifts.

Through a maze of men in motion, a forest of planks and laths and plaster, one glimpses strange sights. Moving in from Broadway, one hears that the sidewalk will have a pattern to match the floor. One sees the beginnings of a French Renaissance lobby rising up fifty-eight feet to a promise of ceiling. learns that three crystal fixtures, each fourteen feet long, will depend from it. On the stairs to the mezzanine, the outline of a fountain takes the eye. Two tireless Carrarra-marble fish, five feet from stem to stern, will spout an eighteen-foot stream above it. Two Luxembourg torches will further adorn the scene, and there will be brocade panels where now some one has penciled roughly, "damask."

Zigzagging gingerly down through confusion, one is in the auditorium. It is bowl-shaped—from rear to stage, and from side to side. This will assure perfect vision from anywhere, one is told. A hundred feet above is a ceiling sans pendants, constructed of an acoustic material with maximum absorbing efficiency. But it may be adjusted easily, maximum to minimum. The main dome will boast a mural.

LEG ROOM FEATURED

The theater Mr. Gumbiner imagined allowed plenty of leg room. So the auditorium, which could seat 3000 easily, will say "full up" with 2200. Every six seats will meet an aisle. This, one's escort explains

one can look back at the auditorium. Spacious loges follow the curve of the main floor at either side. Above them and back are more loges. These are, so to speak, logical extensions of the mezzanine. This mezzanine immediately strikes the observer as extraordinary, seen from below. For its under side slopes up instead of down.

The advantage is apparent even before one is told: No orchestra seat loses the full proscenium view; and the familiar "weighty" feeling, as of pressure from above, is conspicuously absent.

MOTHERS' ROOMS

At the rear of the mezzanine, on both sides, are the "mothers' rooms." "Mothers' rooms?" one repeats, baffled. Well, here mothers, four strong, may retire with their wailing infants and still see and hear the show. A sound-proof glass permits a view of the screen, and loud-speakers do the rest. Or, if quiet is desired, earphones for the mother and—silence for the child.

Above and back from the mezzanine is the balcony.

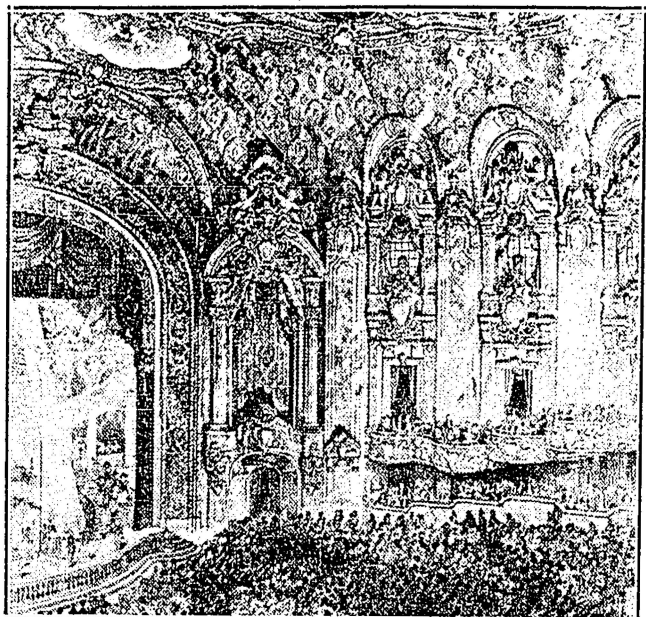
Illumination in this auditorium will not go "on" or "off." There will be darkness and then not darkness, but light like pouring water. It is all part of an amazing new \$34,000 switchboard out of Westinghouse, an Aladdin's lamp. By means of its magic controls, an usher will automatically be informed when a patron is passing up the aisle toward an exit. The same usher will know the exact number of filled seats in his section. Wherever smoking is allowed, he will be able to light a patron's cigarette by reaching toward a wall panel.

Smoking will be allowed in the lounge, which one reaches by descending to the trophy room under the main lobby. The trophy room will have a visible broadcast of the picture on the screen in the auditorium—a replica in miniature. No other theater in the world has anything like this.

New surprises lurk in rooms off the lounge. One is like a circus tent, with everything in it scaled to juvenile size. Another is rich with mirrors surmounted by hand-painted miniatures; this is the cosmetics room. Sumptuous, modernistic rest rooms adjoin the lounge. So, also, does a room for refreshments, complete to the soda fountain. This is under the auditorium.

Beyond and below, twisting and turning like a cave explorer, one glimpses an ushers' clubroom, an awesome transformer-room silent with power, and great ice machines on cork foundations for the control of ventilation and temperature. These alone cost \$80,000.

And far above all are the projection rooms, heart of the playhouse, with full control of lighting and performance. From them, by telephone wires through vacuum tubes, run the nerves and arteries of the Los Angeles Theater.



Architect's Sketch of Interior