



GERSHWIN MUSICAL SHOW WILL OPEN NEW MAYAN THEATER

SHOWHOUSE IS DISTINCTIVE

Mayan Theater. Visualizes Vanished Art

Under Same Management as Adjoining Belasco

Young Mexican Artist Does Unique Work

BY EDWIN SCHALLERT
The transcendent fascination and beauty of an ancient civilization of the North American continent will come to life with the opening of the Mayan Theater tomorrow evening.

This playhouse, a companion to the Belasco in its location, if not in the unique character of its embellishments, sets a new pulse for institutions dedicated to entertainment. It embodies ideas that are singularly artistic in its scheme of construction, and gives every promise of being warmly inviting.

Some months have now elapsed since the inauguration of a new stage theater and consequently a keen interest is expected to surround the Mayan opening. Besides, it comes but shortly before the beginning of the fall season.

The initial production is "Oh, Kay," a very successful New York musical show, written by George Gershwin, with no less magnetic a person than Elsie Janis starring.

"Oh, Kay" has been tried out in San Diego and is, therefore, not starting its career here without that desirable impetus which is only attained after several public performances. It is predicted that it will be running briskly for the premiere.

DIFFERENT POLICY

The Mayan Theater is under the same management as the Belasco. The lessee of the theater is Gerhold O. Davis. Both Edward Belasco and Fred J. Butler are interested in the new enterprise. The main difference in policy is that the Mayan will be given over to the production of musical comedies, whereas the established tradition of Belasco is play presentation. The latter has already enjoyed notable success, particularly with the latest attraction, "The Great Neck."

The management is going upon the theory that one theater helps another when they are adjacent, and when they offer a diversity of attractions. The Mayan is right next door to the Belasco, but its ruddy facade presents a decided contrast to the exterior of the neighbor building.

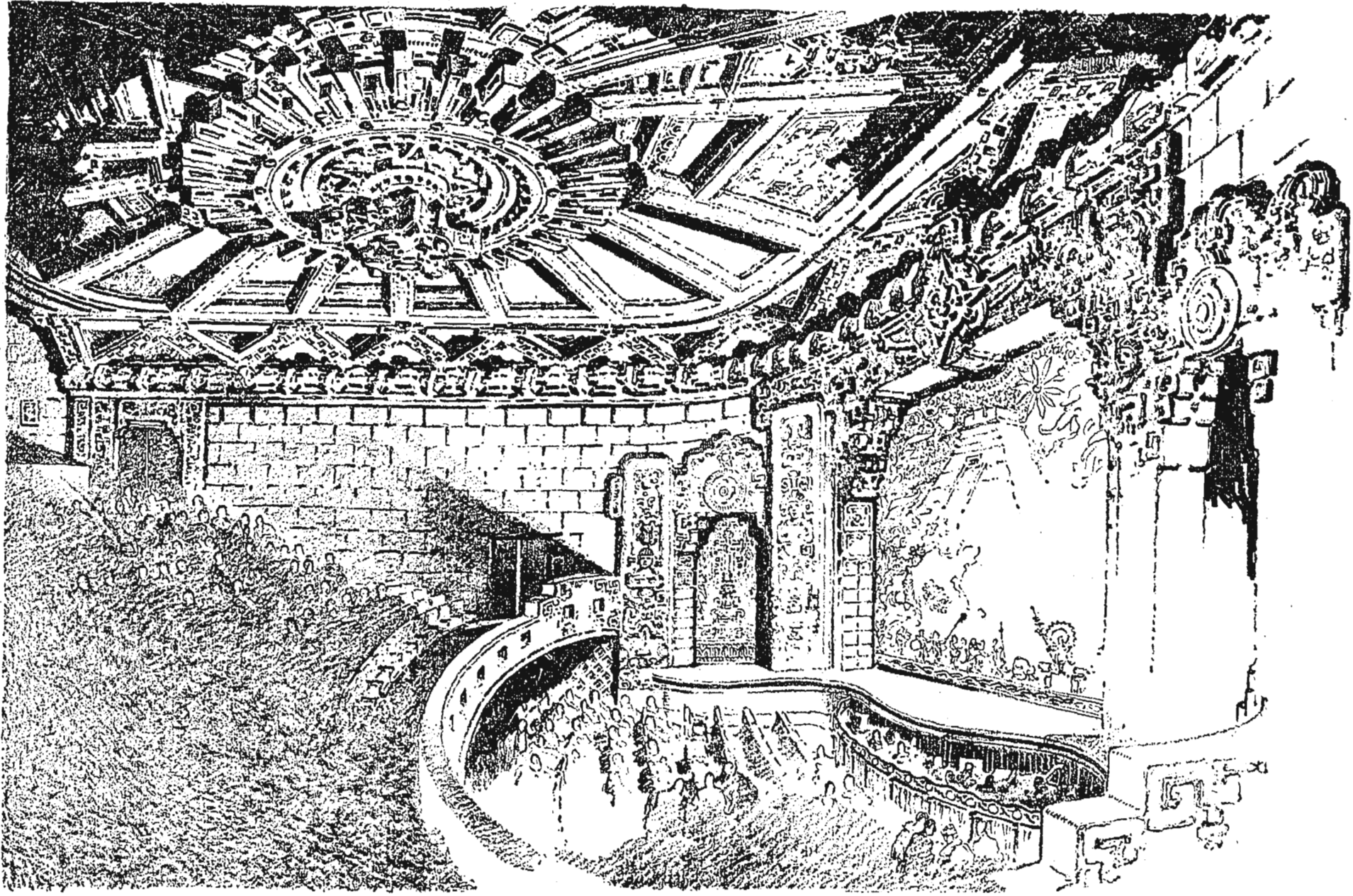
Those who have delved into American history prior to the advent of the white man will find a singular lure in the word Maya from which the name of the theater has been taken. There is perhaps no older known race of people on the American continent than the Mayans. It is assumed by many authorities that they preceded even the Aztecs, and the other aboriginal tribes.

Certainly their civilization was among the foremost, and dates back to the early centuries of the Christian era in certain portions of Mexico. It is told that they had passed their peak as a people, and were in the stage of decadence when the Spaniards arrived, but even then were among the sturdiest opponents of the European invaders.

AZTEC ALSO SHOWN

The Mayan Theater visualizes and idealizes their architecture and their art work as these have been discovered in the course of excavations in Chiapas, Yucatan and elsewhere. There was elaborateness in these achievements in contrast to those of the Aztec. The building embodies the Aztec, however, for contrast. The Mayan inspiration dominates to the extent of being represented in about 75 per cent of the decorative effects.

A young Mexican artist by the name of Francisco Cornejo, working under the direction of Richard Sobleraj, has been chiefly responsible for the embellishments of the theater drawn from these prehistoric sources. He has made an extensive research into the accomplishments of the civilization in his own country, and it was as a result of seeing an article written by him in a Los Angeles newspaper that Mr. Davis developed his own plans for the theater incorporating the Mayan motif.



There is much to study in the adornments of the auditorium itself, and its adjacent surroundings. Sun worship played a large part in the life of both the Mayans and the Aztecs, and this is the prevailing note in the effects that catch the eye.

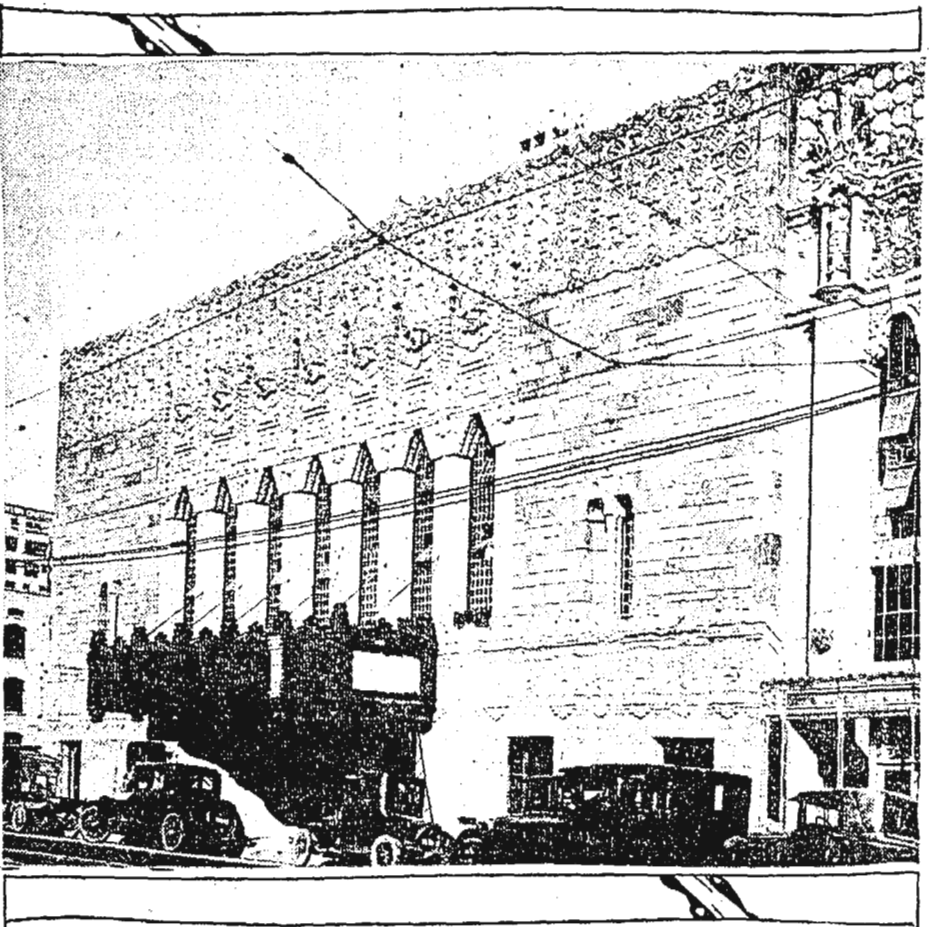
The curtains of the theater are an arrangement by Mr. Cornejo of the famous Maya low reliefs found in Palenque in the State of Chiapas. He himself considers them the purest and most perfect expression that he has achieved of the Mayan idea in the theater. They represent the various phases of worship. The figures of human beings as portrayed in the true Mayan manner are considered remarkable evidence of the sense of artistic proportion that existed in the minds of so early and primitive a people.

There will also be a curtain—rather three curtains for there are two side stages beside the main stage—typifying the Aztec motif.

EXTRA STAGES

The idea of having two smaller stages beside the main stage is a distinct novelty. These may occasionally be used during changes of scenes, for interludes between acts, and for certain special numbers. They supplant the stage boxes that are occasionally used for special numbers.

The ceiling of the Mayan is unusually decorative. Sun worship here again plays a part. The central lighting fixture is in a Maya sun ray design. Around it are paintings and carvings blending both the Mayan and Aztec. On either side wall quite solitary and alone is the carved feathered serpent in the stone, which stone is quite plain aside from this. There are grotesque figures of warriors here and there on the ceiling, and on the doors the Aztec Knight of the Eagle.



Notable Addition to Downtown Rialto
With the brilliant opening of the Mayan Theater tomorrow night, Los Angeles will have yet another elaborate and beautiful playhouse. The interior detail of the Mayan has been sketched by Staff Artist Charles Owens. The photograph is of the exterior of the theater.