



A corner of the auditorium of the new Majestic Theatre, Staines, which is described on the opposite page. Note the atmospheric mural decorations in Venetian style and the manner in which the walls merge, almost imperceptibly, into the curved ceiling, which represents a deep blue sky

How the Trade is Growing

"Venice" in Staines

W. E. Greenwood's New Atmospheric

Yet another residential district near London has acquired a super cinema of West End character with the opening last Wednesday of the Majestic Theatre, Staines.

This beautiful and comfortable house, of which a preliminary account appeared in *THE BIOSCOPE* last week, owes its inception to W. E. Greenwood, chairman of the proprietary company, Majestic Theatres Corporation, Ltd., owners of the Majestic, Wembley, and of the shortly-to-be-opened Majestic, High Wycombe. Besides selecting the site, Mr. Greenwood was personally responsible for the atmospheric decorations of the theatre, and also designed the fibrous plaster, seating, stage settings, lighting, carpeting, and usherettes' uniforms.

The architect of the theatre was S. B. Pritlove, who designed the Gaumont studios at Shepherd's Bush and the High Wycombe Majestic.

Dignified Showmanship

The debut of the Majestic was a complete success of efficient management and dignified showmanship. Punctually at the advertised time the National Anthem thundered out from the magnificent John Compton organ, to be followed by an impressive fanfare by four trumpeters on the stage. The theatre was then formally opened by Commander Sir Edward Nicholl, K.B.E., D.L., speeches also being made by Mr. Greenwood and Carl Brisson, the film star, who had come over from Elstree to attend the ceremony. The generous opening programme included "The Great Gabbo."

The Majestic occupies a spacious site in the centre of Staines, standing well back from the road. It is a steel framed building with brick panels. The whole of the floors are constructed of concrete reinforced with steel, and the balcony is built in concrete steppings, supported by a steel girder 77 ft. long.

Large Car Park

The front elevation, which is a mixture of the Classic and the Modern in style, is carried out in white cement and multi-coloured brickwork. Over the spacious entrance is an ornamental archway which forms a balcony to the tea lounge. On either side of the entrance are two shops, and at the ends of the building are, respectively, the entrance to and exit from the large car park in the rear. Adorning the front of the building are baskets of gaily coloured flowers, and surmounting it are three flag-staffs, while the pediment is embellished with a large illuminated spherical lantern. A large illuminated sign will display the title of the current feature, while loud speakers will broadcast music from the talking films.

From the wide paved forecourt, one enters the vestibule, which has a mosaic floor and walls treated with Plastic Wallite. Illuminated boxes of flowers surmount the oak pay-box. Also of oak are the four glazed doors leading into the crush hall which is floored with rubber to ensure silence. From the crush hall, which is 34 ft. by 22 ft., access is obtained to the manager's office, toilet rooms and cloak-rooms. A staircase leads from the vestibule to the tea lounge for the use of those who do not wish to enter the auditorium. From the crush hall, staircases lead to the tea lounge and the balcony.

The auditorium, which gives a remarkable sense of space, provides seating in red arm-chair tip-ups for 1,038, a further 520 seats being provided in the balcony. Radiating seating ensures an uninterrupted view of the screen. The stage, which is 42 feet wide, is fully equipped for variety turns, while behind are dressing rooms and an orchestra room and music store. In the centre of the spacious orchestra pit stands the console of the Compton organ.

The main portions of the organ are accommodated in a large chamber to the right of the screen, fitted with expression shutters. Many hundred of pipes, ranging from less than 1 in. to 16 ft. in length, give effects of string, wood, wind and brass instruments, besides dignified organ tones. The organist, Leslie Forder, also has at his command a complete equipment of percussion instruments, including xylophone, glockenspiel, drums, castanets, tom-tom, tambourine, cymbals, triangle, etc., and a varied complement of sound effects.

Decoration of the Interior

An outstanding feature of the theatre is Mr. Greenwood's scheme of atmospheric decoration in Venetian style. It includes towers, turrets, arches, bridges, ornamental walls, trees and flowers. The curved ceiling, which merges into the decoration of the walls, represents realistically a deep blue sky. It is pierced with thousands of small ventilation holes. In the turrets on the walls are flood lights, illuminating the rear walls. Other decorative features are employed ingeniously to mask the organ grilles, air inlets, projection room apertures, etc. A pleasing conventional design based on the rays of the sun is introduced with excellent effect in many of the leaded windows and light fittings, and in the terrazzo and rubber floors.

Atmospheric decoration is used also in the tea lounge, which represents a courtyard scene. The walls are covered with Plastic Wallite to represent old stonework, and the ceiling beams, of antique appearance, are

supported on heavy wood piers with trees modelled on them.

In the up-to-date projection room is a Powers Cinephone equipment and Simplex projectors. All the dimmers for the whole of the theatre are housed in an adjoining chamber. On the same floor is the battery room for the secondary lighting system by Chloride batteries.

The management of the Majestic is in the hands of Louis S. Clarke. Publicity for the opening, including the sumptuously produced and admirably written souvenir programme, was handled by R. R. Crosby, publicity director of Majestic Theatres Corporation.

List of Contractors

The General Contractors for the Majestic were Messrs. Kirk & Kirk, of Putney. The Sub-contractors were:—Fairweather & Ranger (steelwork); R. Langston-Jones & Co. (electrical work); The John Compton Organ Co., Ltd. (organ); Bryan's Adamanta, Ltd. (fibrous plaster work); Val Prince (decorations); Maple & Co., Ltd. (carpets); Tomlyn & Stone, Ltd. (chairs); Powers Cinephone Equipment (Parent) Syndicate, Ltd. (talking picture apparatus); Theatre Equipment, Ltd. (electrical equipment); Chloride Electrical Storage Co., Ltd. (emergency lighting); Newtons (electrical equipment); Edgar Fitton & Co., Ltd. (central heating); W. J. Furse & Co., Ltd. (stage fittings); Hall & Dixon, Ltd. (curtains); the Decorative Tile Co. (Terrazzo mosaic work); Doulton & Co., Ltd. (sanitary equipment); Harold Baker (wire mesh interiors of spring seats); British Vacuum Cleaner & Engineering Co., Ltd. (vacuum cleaning plant); Gardiner, Sons & Co., Ltd. (metal windows); Robert Adams ("Victor" door springs); Mellowes & Co., Ltd. (glazing); Arthur R. H. Maxted, Ltd. (metal work); John M. Newton & Sons, Ltd., (glass); Pyrene Co., Ltd. (fire appliances); Robertson & Sanderson (rubber flooring); James Stott & Co. (Engineers), Ltd. ("Scott" Regula Café Set).