

Chicago Goes Atmospheric

*John Eberson, Creator of the Newest Form of Theatre Architecture,
Thrills the City with the New Avalon Theatre, Conceived and
Executed in the Manner of a Sumptuous Persian Temple*

As Described by

John Eberson

Creator of the Atmospheric Theatre

CHICAGO saw the newest atmospheric theater when the Avalon, Seventy-ninth st. and Stony Island av., formally opened its doors about two months ago.

The new Avalon, with its Persian design and Oriental trappings and atmosphere, offered something new in theater beauty and was a welcome contribution to Chicago's theatrical circles.

The idea of the Avalon was first suggested to National playhouse executives during a trip to an old relic shop in the French quarter of New Orleans.

It was here that the sight of an ancient, brass, pierced, Persian incense burner gave birth to the thought of a theater with all the enchantment of the Orient.

The color scheme of the Avalon is blue and gold, enveloping the side walls in an interesting though non-symmetrical fashion.

There is the embellished palace on the left, the tall walls of a Persian rose garden on the right; the sacred pil-

grim's fountain and shrine; the entrance to the Sacred City courtyard; mystic pierced brass lanterns; rich tent hangings; colorful Mosaic panels; jeweled door heads; mirrored curtains, all under the starlit sky of the Near East.

The Avalon has a seating capacity of 3,500. The overhead cooling plant insures a 70-degree temperature the year round without the discomfort of breezes playing about the show-goers' ankles. Another feature is the pearl, hand-inlaid furniture from the far off country of Syria.

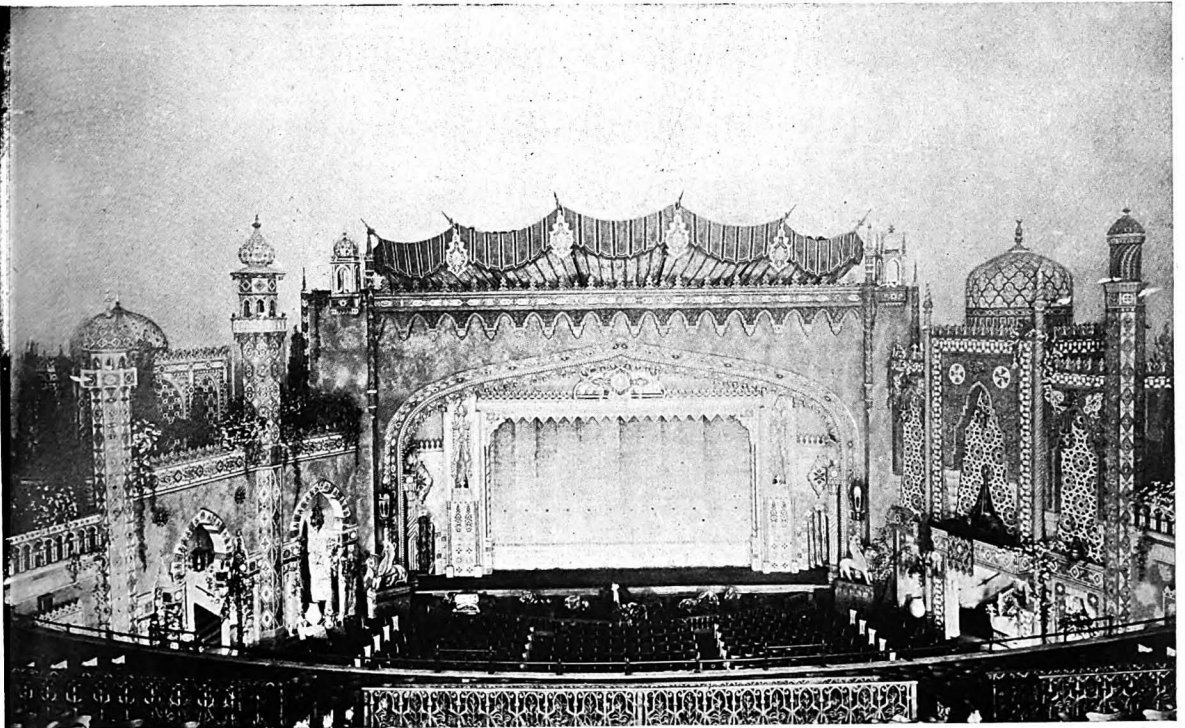
This furniture was imported for the Avalon Theatre and will be seen in the men's smoking room, the ladies' lounge and other rooms throughout the building. They add to the beauty.

However, rather than to attempt to give a second hand impression of this theatre we will welcome the good fortune of having Mr. Eberson's own words of description.

Mr. John Eberson, famous architect of Chicago and New York, and creator



The outer lobby of the Avalon Theatre, Chicago, designed by John Eberson.



The auditorium of the Avalon Theatre was created in the manner of a Persian Court Yard. Note the dissimilarity of the two facing walls, which by the way is part of all the Eberson creations. There is no "ceiling" as such. It is really a faithful reproduction of the open sky.



One of the many mosaics, executed by the famous artist, Morgan, who worked from a miniature model made of broken pieces of colored stones. These stone "paintings" are one of the eye treats in the Avalon Theatre.



The exterior of the Avalon Theatre, Chicago, constructed in all the gracefulness of a Persian temple. The huge sign is the only bit of modernism there.

of the atmospheric type of theatre, is exceptionally proud of this Avalon. At the same time he wishes it always understood that much credit is due to A. C. Liska, his chief draftsman, and to William Hartman, the art director of the Michelangelo Studios, who participated.

Here are the words of Mr. Ebersson:

"I HAVE studied the amusement business and have come to the conclusion that an architect can be of great assistance, influence and lasting interest to the amusement loving public and at the same time offer services which will aid the financial success of the men who are putting large sums of money catering to the cinema business.

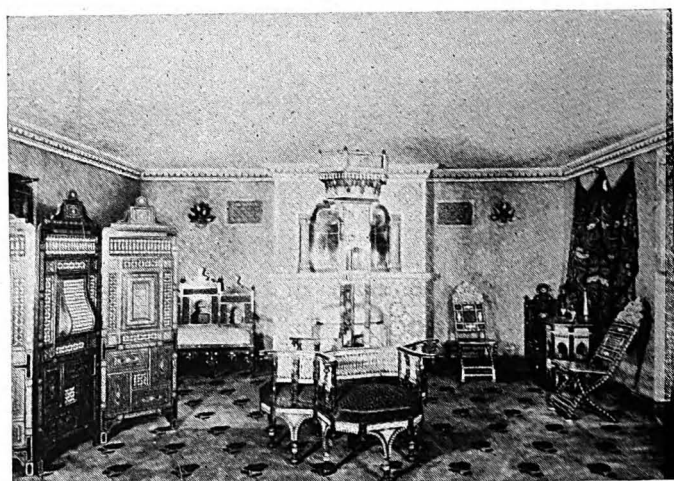
"I believe that people seeking theatrical amusement want to find themselves in a restful atmosphere and want an opportunity to relax.

"I am aiming to build theaters that are not overgorgeous and overdone in glitter and glamour, rather using established styles of basic foreign architecture and combining these Oriental or Mediterranean styles of architecture and settings given us by nature.

"The Avalon is a Persian theater, executed in true conception of the history of this mysterious country.

"When first conceiving the idea of building an atmospheric Persian theater, I naturally tried to gain intimate knowledge through reading for the purpose of finding guidance in the composition and execution of Arabian, Moorish and Persian ornament with which we are all familiar.

"I found that the only source of information was a few travel stories written by wives of certain English officers, who, in disguise, penetrated the secrecy of the holy shrine cities of the Persians and thus gained information as to the



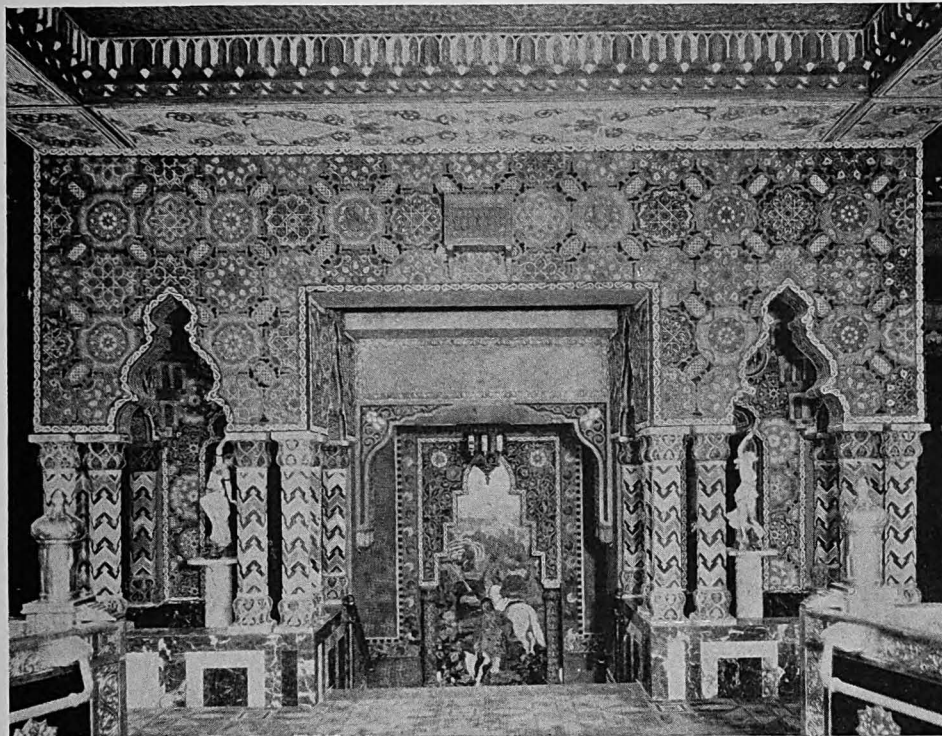
The ladies' rest room of the Avalon Theatre, furnished with many pieces of imported and authentic Persian furniture. There is a magnificent Persian hanging on the wall to the left.

philosophy and the life of this interesting tribe of Orientals. "The Avalon Theater, seating 3,000 people, is a modern theater depicting a Persian palace and a shrine courtyard.

"OUR predominating color scheme was blue and gold. The foyer and lobby of the Avalon is a replica of a princely palace executed by Persian craftsmen, using native materials and arts.

"The floor has a special tile design, a combination of faience and ceramic tile in Oriental design; the marble col-

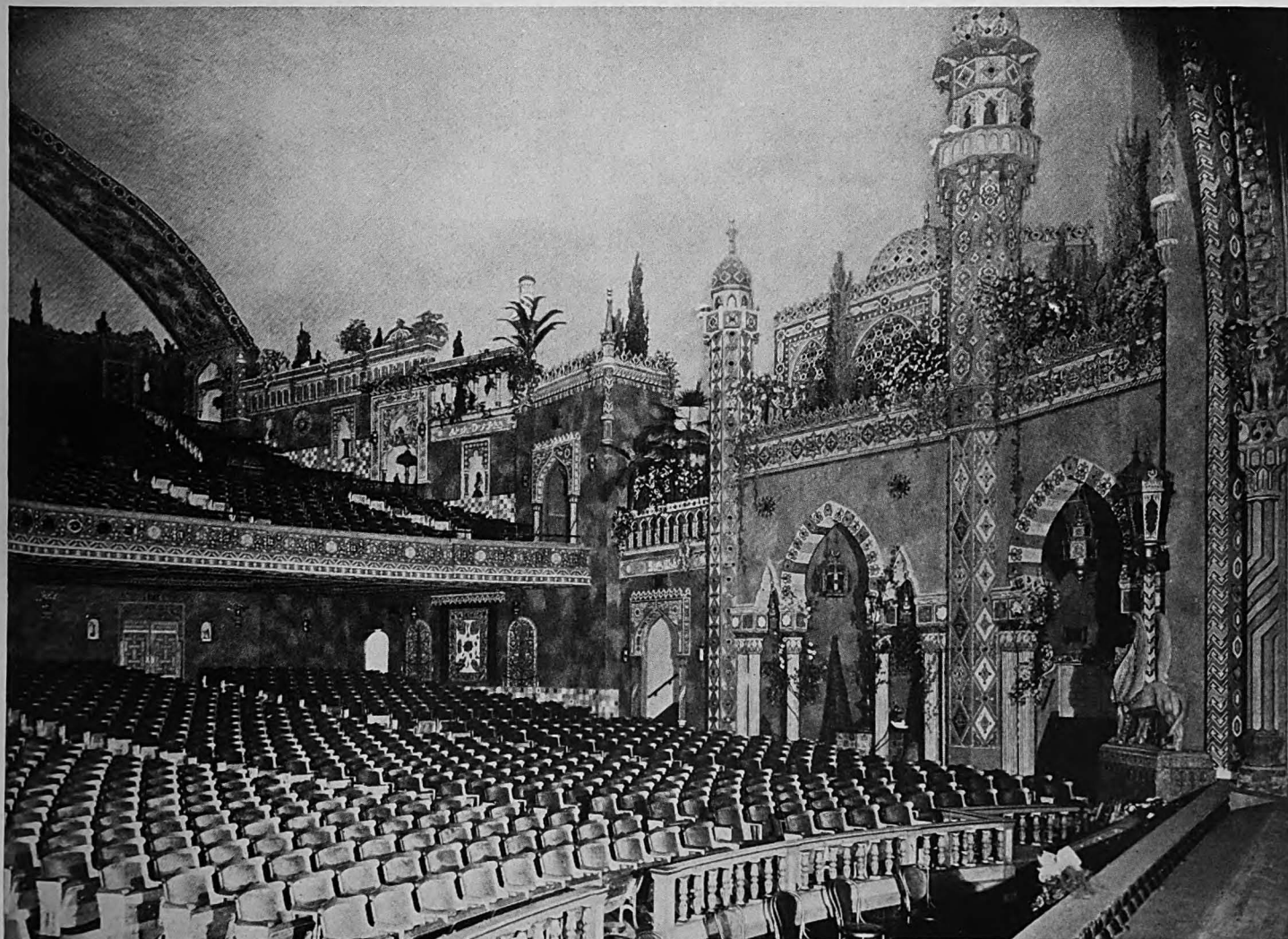
The entrance to the lounge room of the Avalon Theatre, Chicago, a John Eberson creation in the manner of the Persians. Another of the exquisite Morgan Mosaics is seen at the foot of the stairway. The two figures of the Persian dancing girls, at the left and right at the top of the stairs, are pieces of art, done in the clearest of white marble. The whole is a riot of color.



Carrying Out the Mysticism of Oriental Persia

The Avalon Theatre, Chicago
Created by John Eberson

A more detailed view of the auditorium looking to the right. It is next to impossible to explain the beauty of this wall in words alone, and it is little helped by the photograph, for the colorings of the delicately worked arches and columns must be left entirely to the imagination. The green foliage and trees add to the illusion of the outdoor court yard.

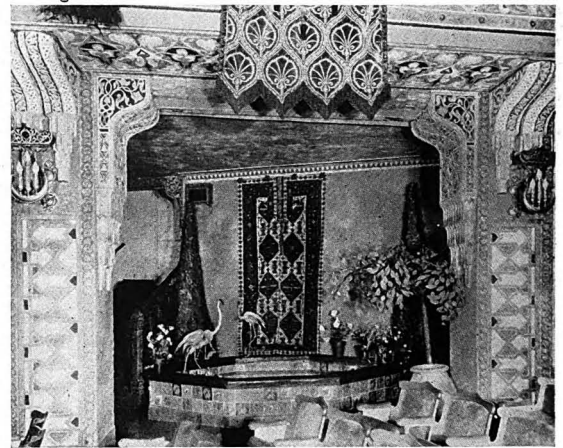




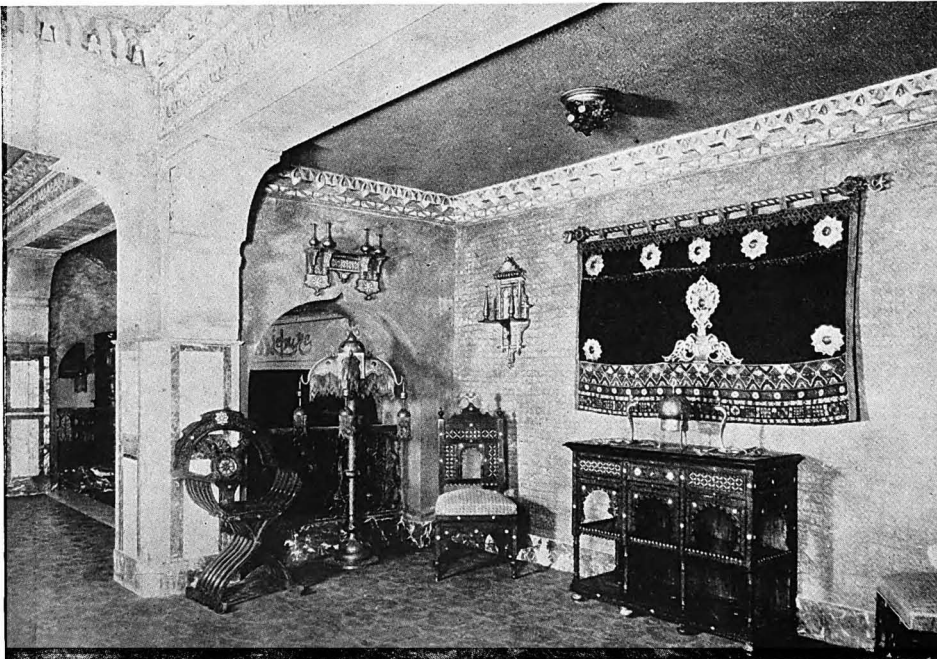
A detail view of one of the fountains that delight the eye in the Avalon Theatre, Chicago, for which John Eberson made the architectural plans.

urns and wainscot are all built up of small, very small, highly polished marble.

"We have in the Avalon Theater lobbies several pieces of marble that I visualized while building this structure—these marbles which are not found in Persia were brought from far distances and laboriously put together. We have over 90 varieties of marbles in the theater.



One of the most interesting corners in the Avalon Theatre is this little pool, with three graceful cranes standing among the snow white lilies. Note also the magnificent hanging on the wall behind it.



Just a little niche on the mezzanine floor of the Avalon Theatre, faithfully fitted with Persian furniture and hangings. This theatre, in its entirety, is probably one of the best ever designed by the famous architect of the atmospheric theatre, John Eberson.

"The lobby of the Avalon contains the most marvelous and unusual Mosaic work ever conceived.

"Charles Morgan, well known Chicago artist, is responsible for these Mosaics, making his own colored pellets.

"The ceiling of the Avalon represents a jeweled rug. Rich antique tent hangings are used over railings to soften the architectural effect of the many repeated archways. The main auditorium of the Avalon represents the courtyard of a Persian city.

"The proscenium arch is a Persian gate complete in every detail. On the sides of the stages are Moorish fountains and water pools, while graceful flamingoes wade in the lily covered ponds.

"A starlit sky covers the auditorium and it might be of interest to know that the grouping of these twinkling stars is identical with those found in the Orient at this time in August. Fleecy moving clouds add to the illusion.

"I am very happy to have had the backing of the owners of the National Theaters Playhouses, allowing me to create this Oriental theater and I am very grateful to my staff."