
Balaban and Katz Open Chicago Theatre

THE great doors of the Chicago theatre, acclaimed as "the largest, most beautiful and artistic wonder theatre of the world," were opened to the public on Wednesday, October 26th.

This theatre, dazzling in its amazing architecture and interior beauty, is the latest contribution of Balaban and Katz's beautification of their city. It has a seating capacity of five thousand and was completed after two years of work at a cost of \$4,000,000.

A huge crowd clamoring to get in when the doors were formally unlocked by Charles H. Wacker, chairman of the Chicago Plan Commission, who acted as master of ceremonies. Mr. Wacker declared that the theatre was the most artistic building now in Chicago. A large number of the leaders of the motion picture industry were guests of Balaban and Katz at the opening, and magnificent floral tributes from friends throughout the country crowded the lobby and foyer. It was necessary to close entrance doors and cease selling tickets early in the evening.

The Chicago theatre is built on an "L" shaped site and the State Street property is used exclusively for a lobby. This lobby, or grand foyer, has beautiful marble walls relieved with ivories and gold decorations and runs back ninety-six feet. Monster marble columns support the promenades and an inspiring circular marble staircase rises at the extreme end and runs upward several stories. The ceiling is in the form of a single dome of great beauty. The foyer rises five stories in height.

The auditorium itself is impressive. It is built in amphitheatre form—that is, it is wider than it is long—and is divided into three floors, the main floor, mezzanine and balcony. An innovation in theatre construction are the boxes running up by the sides of the balcony floor to the topmost part of the theatre.

The architecture and the decorations are of the Louis XIV period, and, like Balaban & Katz's famous Tivoli, have been inspired by the magnificent Chateau de Versailles.

The stage of the Chicago is one of the largest in the country, measuring from end to end 170 feet, and has a proscenium opening of 70 feet, with a depth of 35 feet. It is fully equipped, possessing all lighting and theatrical devices.

The opening feature picture was "The Sign on the Door," by Channing Pollock, featuring Norma Talmadge, and a Buster Keaton comedy had a place on the program.
