

# Achievement

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WORLD 5000 SEATS

## ACHIEVEMENT

Chicago Theatre, in every appointment, represents highest achievement. It is fitting that its herald should be this gigantic, uniquely spectacular electric sign—a supreme masterpiece in sign construction, and the product, of course, of

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# The Chicago Theatre



**T**HE progress of an industry is in direct proportion to the ambitious undertakings of its individual members.

In the rapid development of the motion picture industry there is no exception to this rule. Contributing to its advancement to a foremost position in the world of business and art have been producers, directors, players, distributors, exhibitors, cameramen and other craftsmen. Without the business acumen and creative ability of each the industry would have remained in its experimental stages.

Each succeeding year brings new achievements which surpass the performances of the preceding twelve months. At the moment of attainment these ac-

complishments are heralded as the acme in theatre construction or picture production.

That the ultimate has not yet been attained, and perhaps will not be for years to come, is demonstrated in the opening in Chicago last week of "the wonder theatre of the world."

The Chicago theatre, as it was christened, stands as a monument to the motion picture industry. It is a glowing tribute to the farsightedness and consistent enterprise of each branch of the industry. Better pictures, more correct presentation and more astute showmanship—all have contributed to the building of this costly temple of the silent drama which marks another step forward in the progress of a great industry.

Directly responsible for this crowning achievement in the exhibition field during the past year are Balaban & Katz, showmen, who in four years have attained one of the most prominent places in the amusement world.

The Chicago theatre is a credit to the city whose name it has adopted, to the United States, to the motion picture industry and to its builders. Today it perhaps is the most palatial showhouse in the world. On succeeding pages in this issue the HERALD presents a comprehensive description and photographs of this wonder theatre for the perusal of those who have not been fortunate enough to promenade through its elaborate settings.



ON the left is a view of the ornately decorated and furnished foyer of the new Chicago Theatre. In the background of the picture may be seen the curving marble stairway which leads to the mezzanine and balcony levels.

The foyer is five stories high and is topped by an exquisite dome of iridescent blue. Gracing the foyer are tall and massive columns of marble.

Marble and bas-relief plaster work are utilized in the decorative scheme of the entire theatre.

The foyer is embellished with richly colored draperies and crystal fixtures.

Below is a view of the grand promenade with its marble colonnade. This picture gives a clear conception of the massiveness of the structure.

**T**HE CHICAGO THEATRE as it stands completed and in operation represents an expenditure of approximately \$4,000,000.

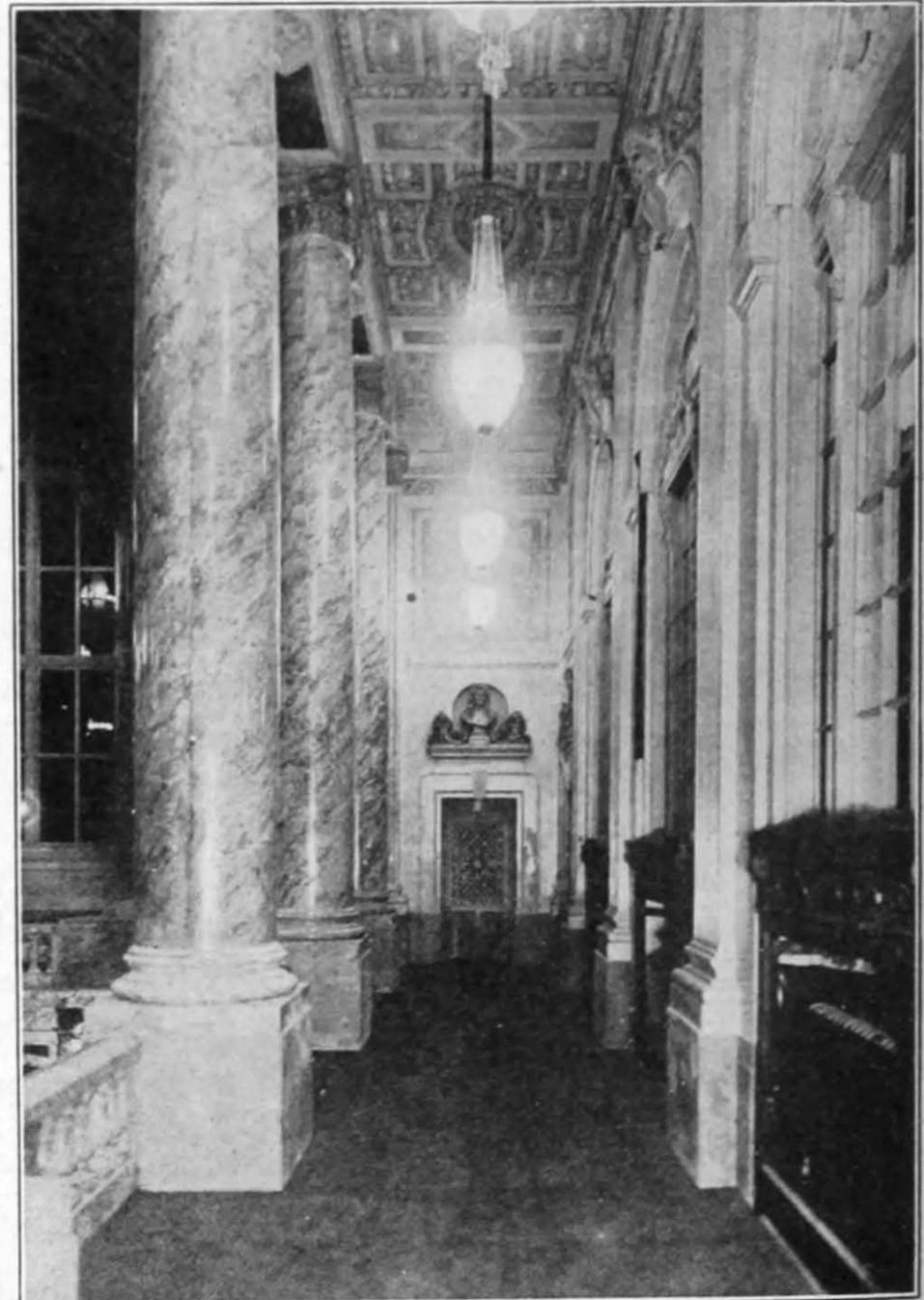
Five thousand people may be seated at a single performance. This capacity, it is said, could be increased to 5,500 under New York City ordinances.

The auditorium is seven stories high and half a city block in width.

The stage is seventy-five feet wide, thirty feet deep and fifty feet long with a proscenium opening of 170 feet.

Three steel girders weighing sixty-four tons each were used in the structure.

A sound proof wall on the Lake street side of the house (to protect against noises from elevated trains) required 310 cars of material and six months to complete. More than 1,000 tons of steel were used in construction.



# Size and Beauty of Chicago Theatre Make It Ranking American Playhouse

New Balaban & Katz House in Loop District Seats 5,000 at a Single Performance—Auditorium is One Half a Block in Width and Rises to a Height of Seven Stories—Marble Predominates in Decorations

**T**HERE will be but few people, if any, who will contradict the statement that the new Chicago theatre which was opened last week at State and Lake streets is the most palatial, if not the largest, playhouse in the country today. Size and beauty differentiates it from all other theatres.

Although the pictures published in this section clearly illustrate its grandeur and massiveness a detailed description will be given to thoroughly acquaint those who have not had the privilege of seeing it with the notable achievement of Balaban & Katz, the Associated First National franchise holders in the Chicago territory and operators of the Tivoli, Riveria and Central Park theatres.

One of the outstanding and interesting facts in connection with the erection of this \$4,000,000 theatre is that the box office alone must maintain it. There is no office space other than that for the amusement company.

The theatre makes an imposing appearance from the State street side. It is a monumental design carried seven stories in height and is constructed of granite and polychrome terra cotta. In the face of the State street side is a triumphal arched window which springs from the level of the canopy and rises to a height of several stories.

\* \* \*

On the State street side is the main entrance which leads into a lobby sixty feet in width. This grand lobby has a depth of ninety-six feet and a height of sixty-five feet. It is treated in an extremely elaborate design with a marble colonnade supporting a rich vaulted ceiling.

The three colored cove lighting system is used in the lobby as well as through the entire house. In the lobby also are crystal fixtures suspended from the main ceiling and large torchere standards.

At the end of the foyer is a grand marble stairway eighteen feet in width which ascends to the mezzanine floor, the upper mezzanine promenade, intermediate balcony promenade, upper balcony promenade and the top foyer of the balcony. In ascending the stairway patrons are at all times in view of the grand lobby.

Back of the main auditorium, which is seven stories high, and at right angles to the grand lobby, is the grand promenade, which extends for half a block. This promenade is twenty feet wide and thirty-seven



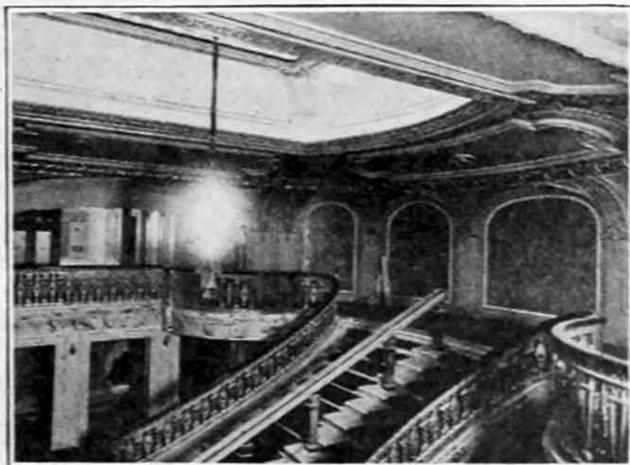
Another view of the new Chicago theatre, showing comfortable seats and spacious balcony.

feet high. At the farther end is a lounge through which the promenade passes and a minor foyer connecting with a woman's rest room. The latter is laid out in a true eclipse with richly paneled walls, silk tapestry panels and modeled ceiling.

\* \* \*

At the mezzanine level there is another promenade with a width of fifteen feet which runs around three sides of the auditorium. This spacious place is elaborately furnished with divans and accessory furniture. On the upper balcony level this promenade effect is repeated.

The European horse shoe plan has been utilized in the seating arrangement on the orchestra level. A minor promenade eight feet in width extends around this horse



Main stairway leading to mezzanine floor, Chicago theatre.

shoe, thus eliminating the usual side aisle. Running around the main floor is a series of richly draped arches, extending from which on each side of the auditorium are commodious loges.

Between the main floor and the balcony is the mezzanine floor which follows the same contour of the main floor. Twenty-five boxes line the contour on the mezzanine level. On this same floor are the women's rest and retiring rooms.

In the balcony ceiling directly above the mezzanine boxes are three oval shaped domes forty-eight feet in length and twenty-five feet in width. These are brilliantly illuminated in the diffused color lighting.

The balcony, constructed on a very slight incline, is treated on similar lines to the main floor and mezzanine by a series of arches along the side walls. Twenty-six loges which are stepped down with the contour of the balcony line both walls.

\* \* \*

A treatment in marble and plaster columns flanks each side of the proscenium opening. By the proscenium boxes there are fountains of marble and statuary which extend to a height of twenty feet from the stage level. To the rear of this statuary and above the mezzanine level is the organ loft.

The orchestra pit is arranged in elliptical

(Concluded on page 64)

## Total of 2,413 Bulbs Used in Great Electric Sign Hung on Chicago Theatre

Word "Chicago" Is Spelled in Six Foot Letters — Sign Built By Thomas Cusack Company Weighs More Than Seven Tons — Is Seventy-four Feet High

The electric sign on the Chicago theatre, constructed and installed by the Thomas Cusack Company, has been pronounced by some of the highest authorities in theatrical circles as a supreme masterpiece in electric sign construction.

The sign is one of the largest that is hung on any theatre. It measures seventy-four feet from top to bottom and seventeen feet in width. A total of 2,413 sockets are used in the construction, holding 75-watt lamps in the letters and 25-watt lamps in the border. The entire display is made of highest grade galvanized sheet iron, the face plates being 20 gauge, the interior efficiently braced and supported with steel angles and channel irons. Special cantilever construction has been used in attaching the sign to the wall of the theatre, a method which has made it possible to do away with wind braces.

### Six Foot Letters

The main portion of the sign consists of the word "Chicago" spelled in six-foot letters, extra deep grooved to take care of special lamps used. Above is "Balaban & Katz" in twenty-four inch letters, and a four-line attraction border

with alternating action goes around the display.

The sign is more massive than would be apparent from its braces, as it weighs over seven tons.

In action, the letters C-H-I-C-A-G-O spell on, burn steady, flash off and then come in solid.

### Four Attraction Panels

A part of the job is the four single faced attraction panels, containing two rows of ten inch changeable letters of special groove type. A continuous high speed spectacular border goes around panels.

The strength of this sign is such that it absolutely dominates State street from Lake street to Van Buren street and is even visible beyond the confines of the Loop. But all the brilliance of State street only serves to emphasize the super-brilliance of this crowning achievement in sign construction.

## Extensive Study of Light Absorption Required to Properly Illuminate House

In the new Chicago theatre there has been introduced what appears to be the closest cooperation possible between the owners, represented by the architects and the illuminating engineer.

From the architect's standpoint the predominant desire has always been design, elegance, and art, while the illuminating engineer has the question of intensities desired, required, and the effect produced by any given system.

"It is in a way entirely delightful to be master of the situation regarding the result to be obtained," said an executive of Hub Electric Company, which concern had supervision of the electrical installations in the new theatre. "We can use as many lamps as we choose to produce certain effects and we can extinguish as many as we wish, all to one end, the effect desired.

### Illumination Vital Point

"But, on the other hand, this unlimited freedom which we have is a perilous gift. How can the architects be sure of choosing the best and most efficient systems in this day and age when the main object of many commercial firms is to sell all of the merchandise possible regardless of whether it is designed to coincide with the result to be desired.

"A definite knowledge of glare, flux, candlepower and light absorption must play a prominent part in promoting the ultimate objects to be obtained.

"The architect cannot be a master of every commodity used in the construction of a wonderful building like the new Chicago

theatre. In this instance they turned to us to assist them in obtaining these extraordinary results, being fully aware and confident that our wide knowledge of scientific illumination would be of marked assistance.

### Exhaustive Tests Made

"Upon investigation we found that certain lamps would not give the desired effects at certain points and consequently it became a proposition of elimination until the proper kind of lamp was found. This resulted in an extensive study of lamp designs and light absorption. Some of the effects are obtained with the lamps all operating on top voltage, others with the lamps at only half voltage and still others with the lamps scarcely glowing."

Final conclusions were drawn on the illumination after the opinions of many experts were put to actual test.

## Control Thermostats by Board at Manager's Desk

In a closet adjacent to the manager's office is installed a control board which indicates the temperatures in various parts of the Chicago theatre, a board which enables the manager to set the various thermostats distributed about the house at proper temperatures.

The board also controls the opening and closing of dampers in the ducts, that is, the fresh air damper may be set half open and the return air half open, also, the foul air exhaust dampers may be regulated. It also provides for the regulation of the heating coils and the cooling system.

In addition to this there are speed indicators showing the speed at which the various fans are running and controls for regulating the motors.

## Automatic Arc Control Used in Chicago Theatre

Installation of the Peerless Automatic Arc Control in the new Chicago theatre was accomplished through arrangements with J. E. McAuley Manufacturing Company of 30 North Jefferson street, Chicago.

It is said of the Peerless automatic arc control that it insures the audience faultless screen illumination all the time and that it eliminates the annoying colored lights, the semi-dark screen, a condition practically unavoidable with the hand-fed arc.

Four of Chicago's finest theatres, the new Chicago, the Senate, the Riviera and the Tivoli, consider the Peerless indispensable in the perfect presentation of their pictures.

## Cove Lighting System Is Installed in New Chicago

(Continued from page 63)

plan and of sufficient size to accommodate at least sixty musicians.

The seating capacity is arranged as follows: Main floor, 2,600; mezzanine, 500; balcony, 1,900. This seating capacity, under New York city ordinances, it is said, could be increased to 5,500.

Leading from the main is a grand staircase to the lounge below. From the grand lobby the main staircase leads down to a lounge which occupies all of the space in the basement under the grand lobby. This room is one story in height. From the foot of the staircase leading to the basement to the north end of the building is a promenade which ends at the women's parlors, off of which open the women's rest rooms. The south end of this promenade leads to the men's smoking and retiring rooms. The smoking room is designed in the Byzantine style, while the women's parlors are carried out in the Moorish.

The refrigerating system will reduce the temperature of the auditorium to 72 degrees when the thermometer outside registers 96 degrees.

The stage which is large enough to accommodate grand opera, is 75 by 30 by 50 feet. Full equipment has been installed.

\* \* \*

The cove lighting throughout the house is of the three color system—amber, red and blue—with the colors independently controlled by dimmers. There is a perfect blend of one color into another every twenty minutes with the diffusion so gradual that it is hardly perceptible.

Hundreds of miles of wire were installed to operate the intricate lighting system. Thousands of bulbs supply the light for the interior and exterior. The mammoth sign on the State side of the theatre can be seen for blocks along the thoroughfare. It dominates the entire district.

The \$100,000 Wurlitzer organ installed is one of the finest in the country. The largest pipe rises three stories in height while the smallest is the size of a lead pencil. A train of seven cars transported the organ to Chicago. Jesse Crawford is the master hand at the organ.

The Chicago theatre has been rightly named "the wonder theatre of the world." Plans for it represent the creative work of C. W. and George L. Rapp, Chicago architects, who have traveled far and wide in their study of theatre construction. They have designed the Chicago largely after the early French period of architecture.

# CHICAGO THEATRE

—Another—

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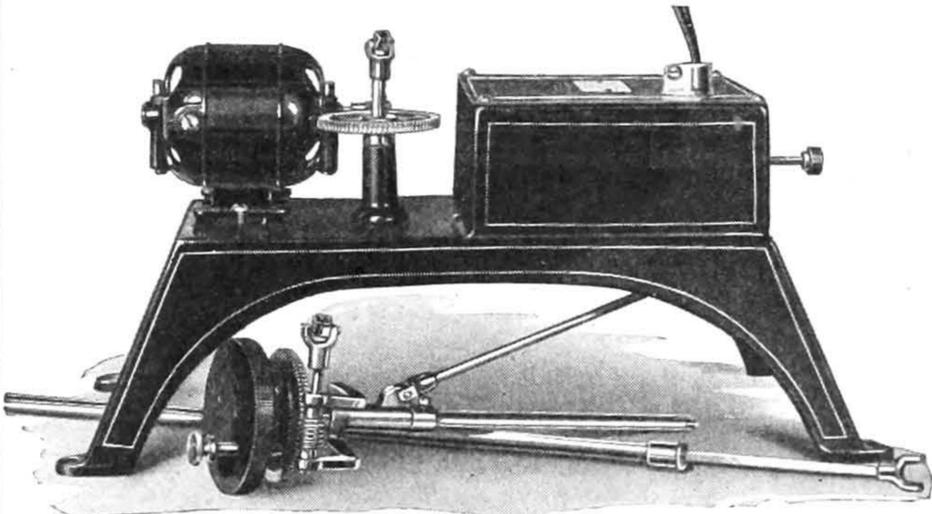
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