



# HOLLYWOOD BECOMING ANOTHER WHITE WAY OF SHOW WORLD

## DIVERSIFIED CHARACTER FOUND IN NEW THEATERS

*Vine Street and Playhouse Will Soon Open Doors With Spoken Drama*

BY EDWIN SCHALLERT

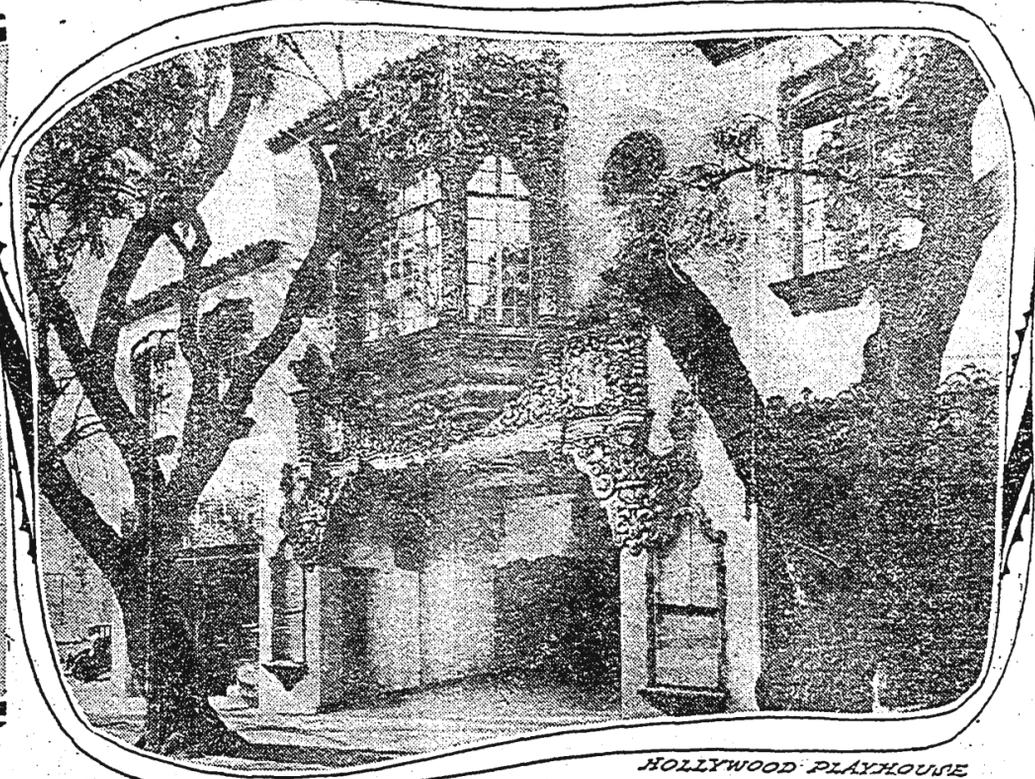
The theaters of Los Angeles and Hollywood are assuming as diversified a character in their policy of play presentation as they are in the matter of architecture.

This fact is especially evidenced in the completion of two new institutions dedicated to the spoken drama, which will open their doors within the next two weeks in the cinema metropolis. These are, respectively, the Wilkes Vine Street Theater, and the Hollywood Playhouse.

Both of them are located on Vine



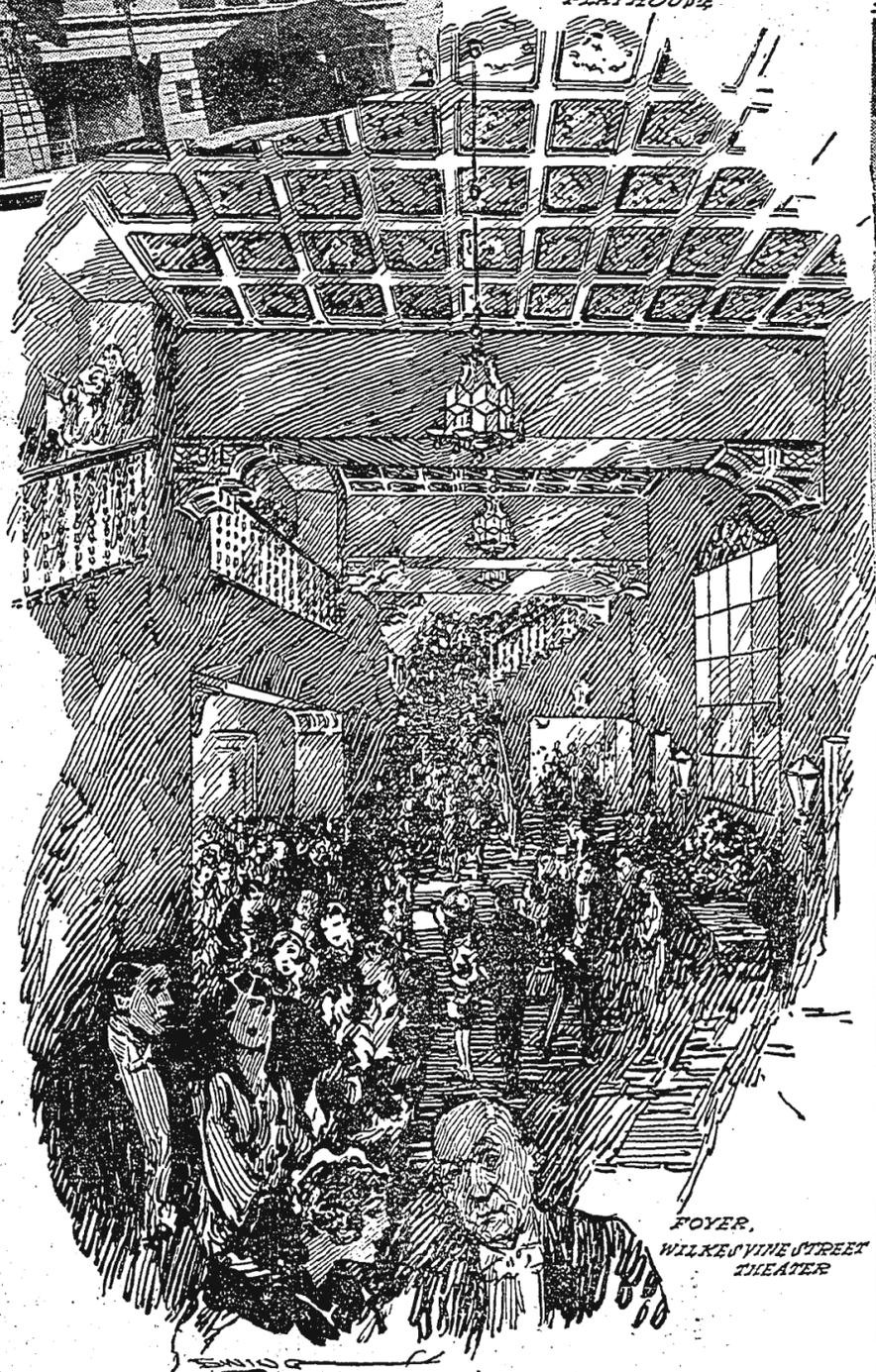
A DETAIL, HOLLYWOOD PLAYHOUSE



HOLLYWOOD PLAYHOUSE



WILKES VINE STREET THEATER



FOYER, WILKES VINE STREET THEATER

street, but so close to Hollywood Boulevard, that the glint of the lights that announce their luminous presence will be plainly visible on that main and now glittering artery of traffic—fast becoming a new White Way of the show world.

With the completion of these two theaters, and the early premiere of Grauman's new Chinese Theater, Hollywood will have six houses dedicated to first-run entertainment, both in plays and pictures. These include Grauman's Egyptian, the oldest established, in which United Artists is now interested; El Capitan, which plays spoken drama attractions; and the Music Box, given over to the light and popular fare of revues.

Six theaters is regarded as an accomplishment for a community which is, strictly speaking, a part of Los Angeles, but which is managing more and more to acquire its own independence, even as it has long possessed a distinct individuality.

**CHANGE AT BELMONT**

Simultaneously with the announcement of the completion of the new theaters in Hollywood, it may be mentioned that there is a motion-picture theater that lies between the main center of stage productions in the heart of Los Angeles, and the Hollywood district, which is to be turned over to the spoken entertainment. This is the Belmont, at First and Vermont.

All of this gives a spreading scope to activity in the realm of the stage, commensurate to a large degree with that which has already taken place in pictures.

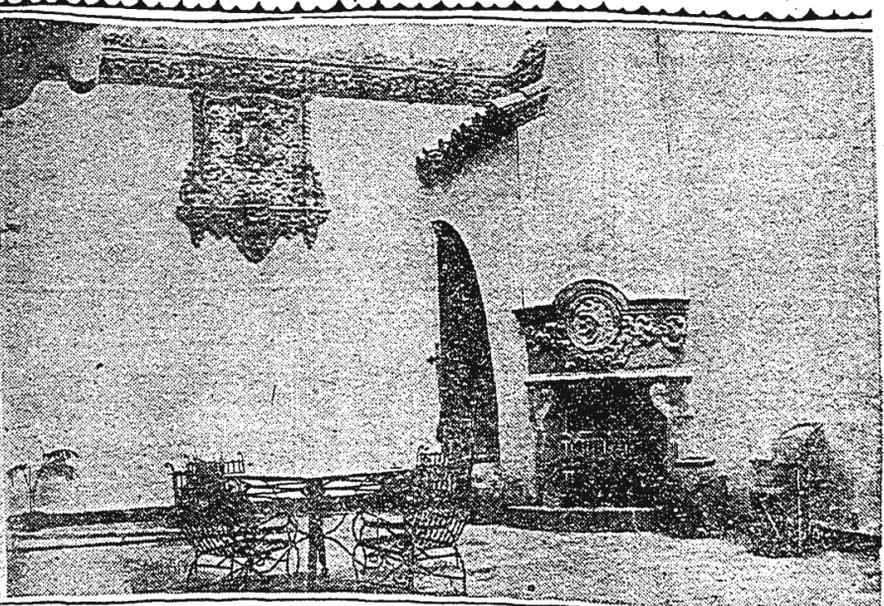
Right in the heart of the film city, this activity is even a little more pronounced. Spoken drama theaters will soon outnumber those devoted to the screen two to one.

It has been a race to see which of the two new theaters in Hollywood would first be opened. The Wilkes is to throw its doors wide Wednesday evening. The Hollywood Playhouse will follow suit five days later.

The first attraction at the Wilkes Theater will be "An American Tragedy." The Hollywood Playhouse will give the first performance in the West of "Alias the Deacon." The Belmont tonight is offering, as its first production, a new piece, called "I'm Sitting Pretty."

**DREISER DRAMATIZATION**

It is the Vine-street Theater opening around which interest will this week center. Here is being produced for the first time on the Coast, one of the outstanding New York successes of the current season. It is based on the two-volume novel of



PATIO, HOLLYWOOD PLAYHOUSE

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is optimistic over this enterprise. "If I were opening a theater downtown at the present time, I might be trembling over the outcome," he said, "but here I feel perfectly sanguine as regards the future. The more theaters that Hollywood has, the more will it attract the theatergoing public."

"In this playhouse we are attempting to cater only to a very discriminating audience. We feel that the location is ideal. The availability of parking space enters into this very largely, because it is undoubted that a great number of our patrons will motor to this theater. The Vine-street will be easily accessible to this group of people since it is situated on a main traffic highway. Nor is it more than a step from the street car for those who use that means of transportation."

**MODERNIST NOTE**

The theater discloses a decided modernist note—especially in the avoidance of any specific type of architecture. The decoration of the interior has been supervised by Dickson Morgan, as technical director, its inspiration was an eight months' trip to Europe, as well as ideas that he has long entertained regarding theater building. The architect for the structure was Bryon Hunt.

The charm of this theater is its utter and amazing simplicity. There is not a surplus door or passageway, and the general effect secured is one of remarkable intimacy. The front rows of the balcony especially seem to jut right out to the stage itself.

The capacity of the theater on both floors is a little over 1000, about evenly divided.

**EASY COLORS**

A neutral shade of brown is predominant as far as the carpeting goes, while the seats blend red with delicate stripes of gold. There is a lounge on the balcony floor, in which green is the predominant hue.

The theater is lighted by two crystal chandeliers, and a minimum of side and drop lights. The ceiling suggests the oriental net, particularly in its pastel shades, which are also carried out in the lighting. Mr. Morgan is an authority, however, for the fact that the decorative scheme avoids even the oriental note, and attains rather the futuristic.

A variety of novelties will be introduced in the staging—one of these being the limiting of the altitude of certain sets to eight feet. This is made possible by the apparent closeness of the balcony to the stage, and by other details of the construction, such as the slope of the floor.

It has also been sought to avoid artificiality in the stage picture, by the elimination of the conventional frame around the proscenium. It is Mr. Morgan's plan also to have the lighting of the footlights synchronize later on with the rising of the curtain, so that the audience's attention may virtually melt into the play, as the curtain goes up, without having the obviousness of footlights shining on this curtain thrust upon their vision. These are details, but interesting as indicative of the newer note in theater building.

Following the production of "An American Tragedy," an original play will probably be produced. It is the intention to alternate between tried successes, and entirely new productions, and it is believed by Mr. Wilkes that this policy will work out very

acceptably. It is to be noted that much the same intention prevails at the Hollywood Playhouse, although no such definite plan has been projected with regard to alternating the two types of presentation.

**CONTINENTAL PLAN**

The Hollywood Playhouse, which is scarcely a block away from the Vine-street Theater, may be described as entirely different from any theater in that it offers to view as one enters a grand staircase, modeled in a general way after the European continental plan. By this means access is gained to the balcony and also to the open-air patio that serves as a lounge. Entrance to the lower floor is through doorways on either side of this staircase.

Beside its ornamental features, we have felt that the grand staircase would be a distinctly important departure in many ways," declared Edward W. Rowland, managing director of the theater. "We want among other things to give the balcony some of the attractiveness that it has lost in recent years. We intend to cater in as popular and democratic a way as possible to the public of this locality."

"We feel that in this location we can by virtue of our range of prices, and other circumstances really reach a very large potential public. In this connection, the growth not only of Hollywood and its immediate vicinity is to be considered, as well as that of Los Angeles, but also of San Fernando Valley points, to which this theater will be very readily accessible."

The opening production will be "Alias the Deacon," a comedy-drama and character study, which enjoys the record of a great success in New York. Berton Churchill and Frances Underwood of the original company are both appearing in the piece here. Helen Ferguson has the ingenue part, this being her Los Angeles debut in a stage production. She has been in pictures for about five years.