In This Issue: “The Showman”

Motion Picture News

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New York
SOLVING PROBLEM OF SPACE LIMITATION

Harnessing seemingly an impossible situation, the architect of the Tower Theatre, Los Angeles, has devised a most ingenious solution of the problem of erecting a de luxe type theatre with a seating capacity of 900 on a lot measuring fifty by one hundred and fifty feet. Above is a general view of the auditorium.
The main stairway located at the end of the grand hall, achieving on a small scale the impression of strength and dignity which is one of the outstanding effects of the massive de luxe picture theatres.

The main lounge, a luxuriously appointed resting place for the patrons of the Tower theatre. There is spaciousness and a richly comfortable note in the decorative treatment and furnishings found in this lounge.

Orchestra Floor Plan

Mezzanine Floor Plan
A THEATRE BUILT ON A LOT 50 X 150 FEET

Ingenious Design Overcomes Space Restrictions in Los Angeles Playhouse
Seating Nine Hundred, S. Charles Lee, Architect

PROBABLY one of the most difficult things for this publication to locate for its readers is a building without precedent, and we are publishing in this issue what we believe to be a find. Harnessed with seemingly an impossible situation, the architect of the Tower theatre, Los Angeles, has devised a most ingenious solution to the problem.

To analyze his problem from the outset, the owner of the theatre, H. L. Gumbiner, well known operator of a chain of theatres, owned a lot on the southeast corner of Eighth and Broadway, Los Angeles, a major intersection of the main downtown thoroughfare. This lot was only 50 x 150 feet, with no possibility of acquiring more ground. The location formerly contained a theatre of 650 seats. The owner wanted a new house to seat 900, and in addition must have shops or stores on the two street fronts in order to keep a flow of people past his doors. The difficulties of the project can be seen at a glance, by the experienced; a small area with which to work; bringing the people into the house off center; an architectural treatment so as to obtain spaciousness on the inside; and an architectural motif for the exterior that would denote the prominence of the location and not be dwarfed by a ten-story building adjoining it.

It is conceded by those who have studied the situation that the architect, S. Charles Lee, of Los Angeles, has succeeded to an unusual degree in obtaining a perfect solution for this building. The exterior has been treated with a large clock tower that is visible for many blocks down the street. The type of architecture he has emphasized is a modified French Renaissance. The theatre canopy has been beautifully handled from an advertising and lighting standpoint as well as its architecture. The "Tower Theatre" sign has been built integral with the building of Terra Cotta. Space has been provided on the roof of the building, with terra cotta sign frames, which will be used by commercial advertisers.

The interior of the house is done in French Renaissance. The lobby is French Napoleon and Italian Botteceino marble with bronze hand rails and bronze column caps. The auditorium has a very high, domed ceiling with exquisite mural paintings, and the balcony has an exit condition never before achieved, and upon this revolves the entire ingenuity of building this house on a fifty-foot lot. The basement contains a lounge room capable of comfortably holding half the capacity of the house. In addition to the ladies' and men's rest rooms and marble toilet rooms, there are two children's rooms: one in the basement with the usual toy and play room arrangement, and one in the upper part of the auditorium, behind sound-proof glass partitions where a mother may care for her young child and see the performance at the same time. Music is brought into all rest rooms, play rooms, etc., through microphone transmission.

The house is designed for motion pictures only, and is equipped with Vitaphone and Movietone. It is the most expensive house per seat of which we have a record; however, the wisdom of its arrangement and expenditure has been upheld by the receipts since the opening, and the owner has pronounced it a sound financial undertaking.

H. L. Gumbiner, owner of the theatre, has given Los Angeles a new amusement palace that is a tribute to the motion picture industry.

Charles Michelstetter, general manager of the Tower theatre, has been associated with Mr. Gumbiner in the theatrical business for more than 15 years. He has guided the destinies of some of the largest motion picture houses in the United States.

When work commenced on the building of this marvelously, the contractors were given orders to use the best materials obtainable. Expensive imported marbles from Italy, France, Alaska, and Vermont quarries have been used in the building of the expensive structure. Genuine solid bronze which is beautifully cast has been used in the interior and exterior fittings.

A unique feature of the Tower is the mammoth chandelier which hangs in the entrance lobby. The beautiful fixture is made of crystals, marble, and bronze and cost a small fortune.

Imported walnut was used in the finishing of the entire building. The furniture in the theatre is also made from this same material in order to bring about complete harmony.

The mammoth refrigeration machine in the basement of the theatre is the only one of its kind west of Chicago. This great machine will control the heating and cooling of the entire theatre.

The huge clock on top of the tower of the theatre is also unique. It is the only tower clock on any theatre in the West. Several weeks were spent in assembling and placing the clock in position. It has faces on all four sides of the tower.

The convenience and comfort of his patrons was the foremost thought in the mind of Mr. Gumbiner in the designing and building of this beautiful theatre.

A model nursery for children is one of the many results of his forethought. Since this theatre has opened this nursery has taken care of 250 children in one day. Two nurseries are always in attendance. Mothers check their children, thereby enabling them to see the presentation of a picture without having to care for a young child.

The Tower is the first popular-priced theatre in Los Angeles to install Vitaphone and Movietone equipment.

Another feature of this theatre is its drinking system. Patrons of the theatre can drink cool, sterilized water at any time. All water served in the theatre is sterilized and cooled, fountains being placed at a number of convenient points.

The Tower theatre recently had its gala opening which was attended by most of the greater stars and producers in the moving picture industry.