

NEW EGYPTIAN THEATRE OPENS TUESDAY EVENING

TRIBUTE TO THIS CITY

Doors To Playhouse Will Be
Opened To Public At Six
O'Clock

ALL IS READY NOW

DeKalb's new \$300,000 DeKalb Egyptian Theatre, built through the co-operation of approximately 200 individuals of this city, members of the DeKalb Theatre Company, will be opened to the public at 6:00 o'clock tomorrow evening. Everything will be in readiness for the opening it was announced today by Manager Dale A. Lelfheit and John Miller, of Woodstock, president of the DeKalb Egyptian Theatre. Mr. Miller heads the company which will operate the theatre while Mr. Lelfheit is president of the DeKalb Theatre Company, builders of the new show palace.

Although the doors of the theatre will be opened at 6:00 o'clock, the curtain will not rise on the first evening performance for another hour, 7:00 o'clock. There will be but two shows tomorrow evening, it has been announced. But the public will be allowed to wander through the beautiful building as long as is wished. The doors will be open early in order that they may have this opportunity.

The opening of the new 1,600 seat theatre is the realization of a dream brought to perfection by the architect, Elmer F. Behrns, for several years a member of the firm of Rapp & Rapp, considered the dean of theatre architects. Mr. Behrns has designed a number of theatres, including those in Woodstock, St. Charles Crystal Lake, Pekin, and in other Illinois and Wisconsin cities. Mr. Behrns has become a familiar figure in this city as he has personally supervised the construction of the motion picture playhouse.

The following description of the new theatre is by Mr. Behrns:

By Elmer F. Behrns, Architect

The DeKalb Egyptian Theatre in its name, arouses in one thoughts of Nile, Sphinx and Pyramids—and a better approach to this style of architecture (starting at the beginning of the third millennium before Christ and existing for a period of over 3,000 years) let the reader be guided by a short synopsis of Egyptian history as they look at the design of this theatre.

As one sees the exterior of this theatre he is attracted to the two guardians of this temple flanking each side of a stained glass window, in which is depicted the sacred beetle of the Egyptians. The two guardians, or Pharaohs, as they are called, are the kings and leaders, who started the building of the pyramids and royal tombs and to this day their statues guard palace and tomb Thru-

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out the whole theatre an effort has been made for strength and dignity, as the Egyptian style in itself is a monumental one. The rich flora of the Nile, especially the lotus and papyrus, furnished the principal motifs of ornament, and even suggested the form of structural design.

On entering the lobby one is impressed at the loftiness and grandeur of the two story lobby, with massive beams and pilasters, yet extremely refined and delicate. At the far end of the lobby one sees the grand stair case leading to the mezzanine balcony. Here, as everywhere else, one finds the whole result a harmonious affair even the the furnishings, such as furniture, lighting fixtures, etc. The main foyer, too, maintains a certain ruggedness, enhanced by ornamental cornices.

Sky Is Depicted

On entering the main auditorium, the traditional elements of composition in plan have recurred here; mainly the open court, even as in the old times, surrounded by a continuous colonnade or peristyle with the open sky above which the rainless-climate permitted. In the theatre, one sees murals between these columns, furthering the effect of old Egypt and incidentally making the interior appear as a vast court. These murals depict sunrise and sunset and also a transition of Egyptian architecture from 3,400 B. C. to 1,100 B. C.

The beauty of this style is in its naturalness. Take one of the columns as an instance—the motif of this design was taken from the palm, papyrus or lotus palm leaves, being carved upright about the top of the shaft, bending gracefully under the weight of the abacus. Likewise the ornament is based on natural forms or on conventional geometric lines—all tied together by colors that are just as impressive as the architecture itself.

Style Is Dignified

The Egyptian style, though monumental, and dignified, is nevertheless, famous for beauty of proportion and dignified grace, which gives it the touch of magnificence and sublimity far more than a maze of ornamentation and myriads of color ever could.

And so, on looking at the statues of Rameses II, set in a canopied niche in each side, one can feel the quiet, peaceful and restful dignity of this particular style which was taken during the reign of Rameses II, about 1200 B. C.

And again, looking further, at the organ arches and then at the proscenium itself, surmounted by the bust of a Pharaoh, one is not sur-



George F. Baker, multi-millionaire New York banker, earned his first money (\$7) selling cranberries he found beneath bushes other pickers had overlooked. Today he is one of the five richest men.



GEORGE F. BAKER

prised to see the same effect in the asbestos curtain and drapes; is not surprised to see a huge stage which can accommodate all vaudeville or community plays, and has all the modern conveniences and stages, sets and properties.

The projection room equipment is the same as used in the best theatres. All of the lighting effects are controlled from a switchboard in the projection room and are obtained by means of resistance plates. These plates or dimmers allow the operator to fade out one or more colors and bring up another color, thereby getting an indefinite amount of color combinations.

In the winter time the theatre is heated with fresh, clean air taken from outside. A large fan draws the outside air in and blows it over two large cast iron furnaces which warm the fresh air to proper temperature. The air is then forced through ducts or tunnels to the mushrooms under the seats. The foul air is then exhausted through the grill in dome and grills in rear balcony ceiling by means of roof ventilators. The amount of fresh air delivered, each hour for each person is 1,200 cubic feet.

In the summer the patron will receive ventilation from a fan on the roof, which will introduce the air into the auditorium through the grills in the ceiling organ lofts.

The building occupies a site of 162 feet by 74 feet, without the lobby which is 25 feet wide and 95 feet long.