

DETAIL OF FORECOURT AND SHOPS, GRAUMAN THEATER, HOLLYWOOD CALIFORNIA
MEYER & HOLLER, ARCHITECTS

A Theater Designed in the Egyptian Style

By FREDERICK JENNINGS

ARCHITECTS who visit the new Grauman Egyptian Theater in Hollywood are likely to be rewarded for their exertion, since the design is most unusual and therefore replete with interest. Time alone will demonstrate the wisdom of the owner in building a playhouse possessed of so many extremes in design. The architects are Messrs. Meyer and Holler of Los Angeles.

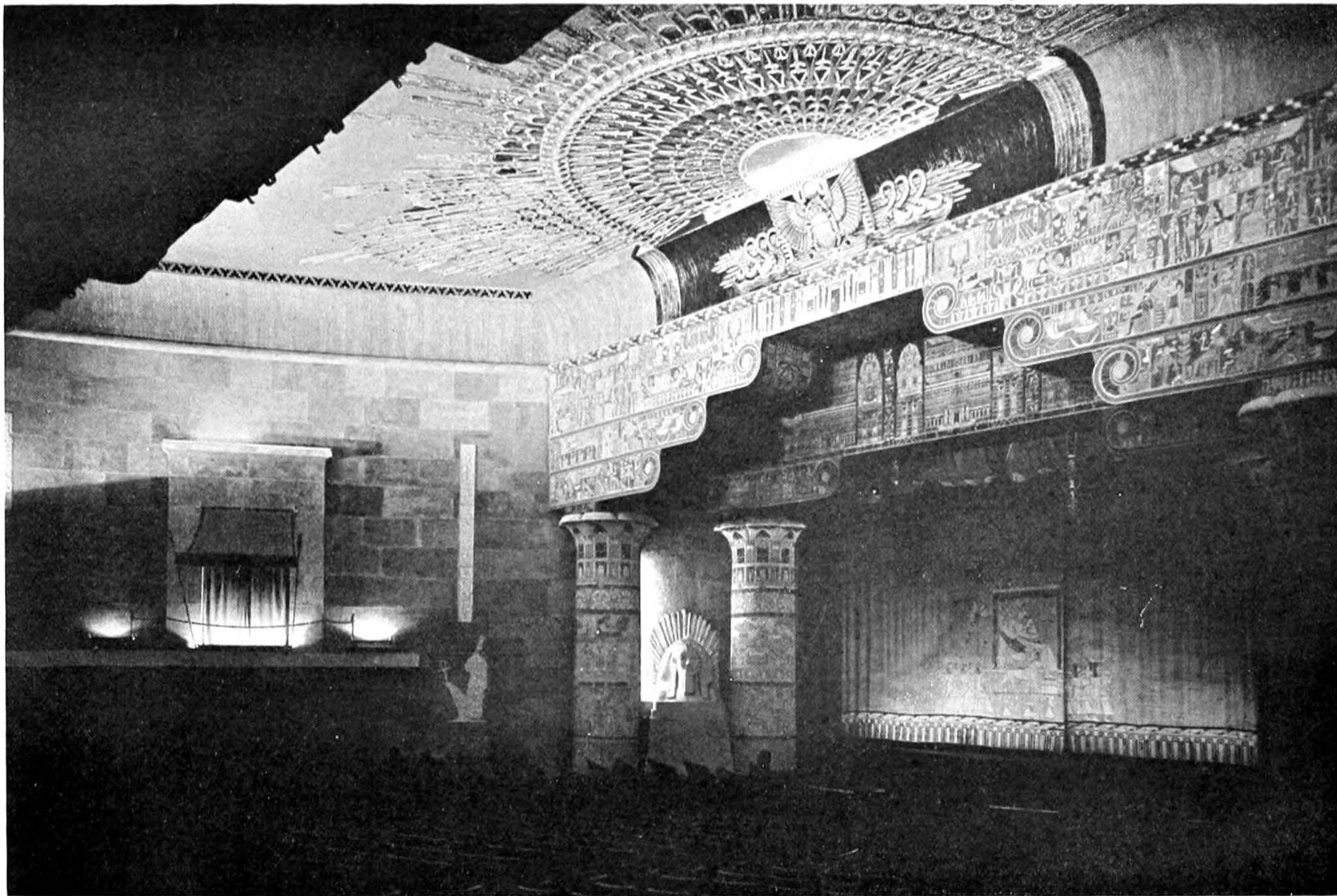
The usual conception of Egyptian architecture, because of the fact that most of the remaining examples of such architecture have stood the weathering of centuries and are in ruins, is that the style is one that is coarse, monotonous and cold, but a careful study was made of many restorations of Egyptian color decoration, and the most accepted examples of such color decoration were a guide in the decoration of this theater. The result was that the adoption of a most harmonious color scheme throughout the theater was accomplished.

An outstanding feature of the manner in which the problem of design was approached is that care was taken to have highly decorative and elaborate motives used in contrast with extremely simple and plain surfaces. In this respect the theater offers a most pleasing contrast to many theaters, in that the entire interior is not completely covered with decoration and ornamentation on every available surface. Fortunately the architects were permitted to have complete charge of the designing and construction of the theater, as well as all equipment and fittings. Therefore, such things as the theater chairs, carpets, draperies, stage curtains and furniture were all designed within the architects' organization, and the result was decidedly pleasing in that the same character of refinement and detail is carried throughout the entire theater, making every part of it harmonious.

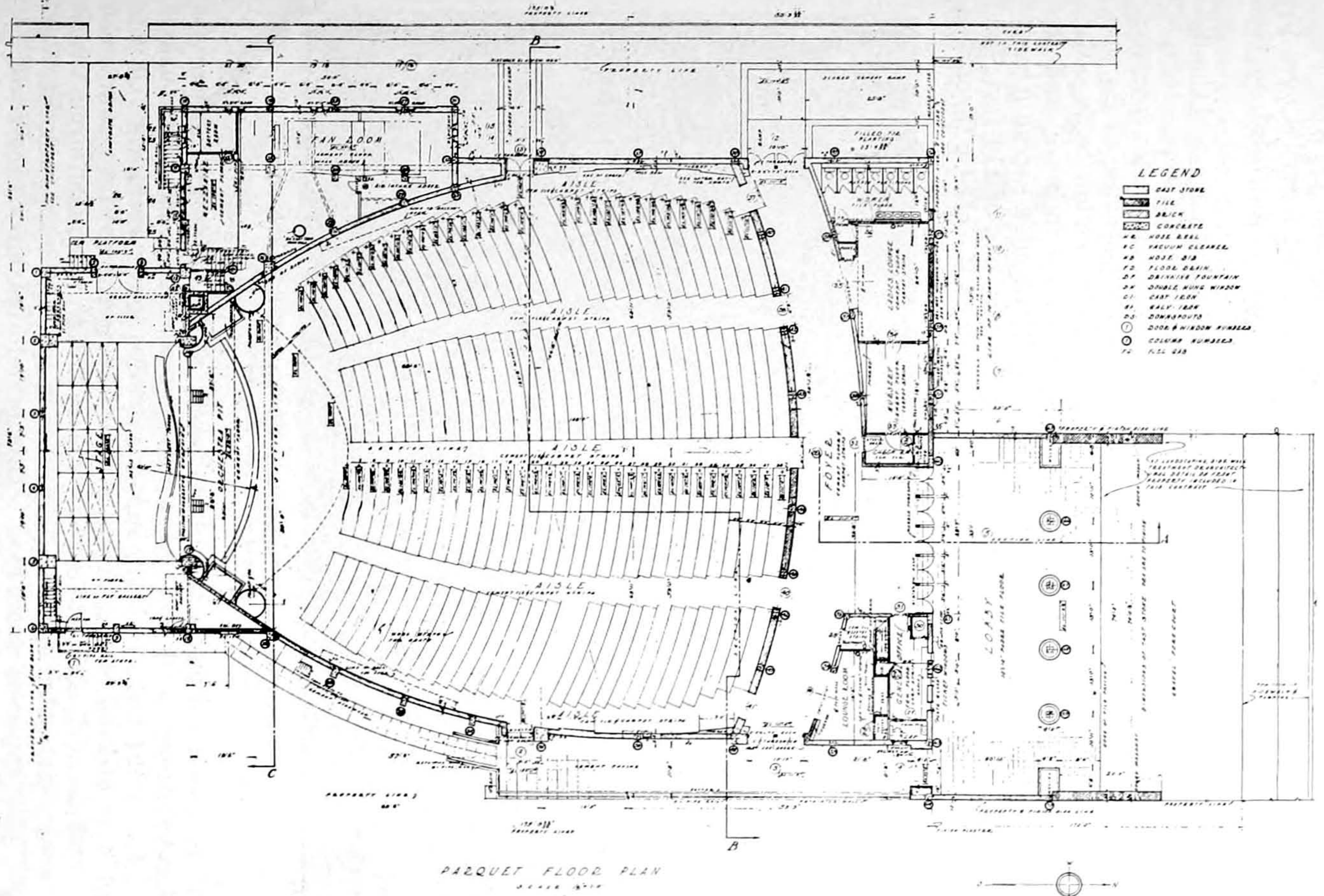
The approach to the theater is through a magnificent courtyard opening on Hollywood Boulevard near McCadden Place. Studded with ornamentations that bring to mind the motif of the new playhouse, this courtyard, which would have delighted the eye of Cheops himself, gives a charming vista to the main doors of the film temple. Lined on the right with palm trees and potted plants that embower a sparkling fountain, the transmosaic left martials a row of Oriental shops that will naturally delight the theater's patrons. Stairs like those that run to roof tops in distant Asia Minor give access to the planes above, where one may view the decorated front of the theater from a charming angle.

Like all other sections of the temple of art, the doors, vestibules and lobby of the film palace are painted or carved with hieroglyphics. Even the shades of the chandeliers bloom with picture paintings of the ancient race that struggled to compile an alphabet. Vases, large and small, made like those of mystic Egypt, are a part of the decorative scheme, while from every side gleams the birdlike countenance of Isis, acclaimed by the Egyptians as the supreme of all goddesses.

Coming from the bright sunlight of the forecourt, which is 45 feet wide and 150 feet long, then passing through a massive Egyptian colonnade, one enters the lobby, 75 feet wide and 25 feet deep, with its ceiling 24 feet above the floor, and next passes into a curved foyer leading to the aisles of the auditorium. It is then that the true glory of Grauman's dream is realized, and one comprehends that only a surpassing vision could have given form to such a wealth of detailed harmony.

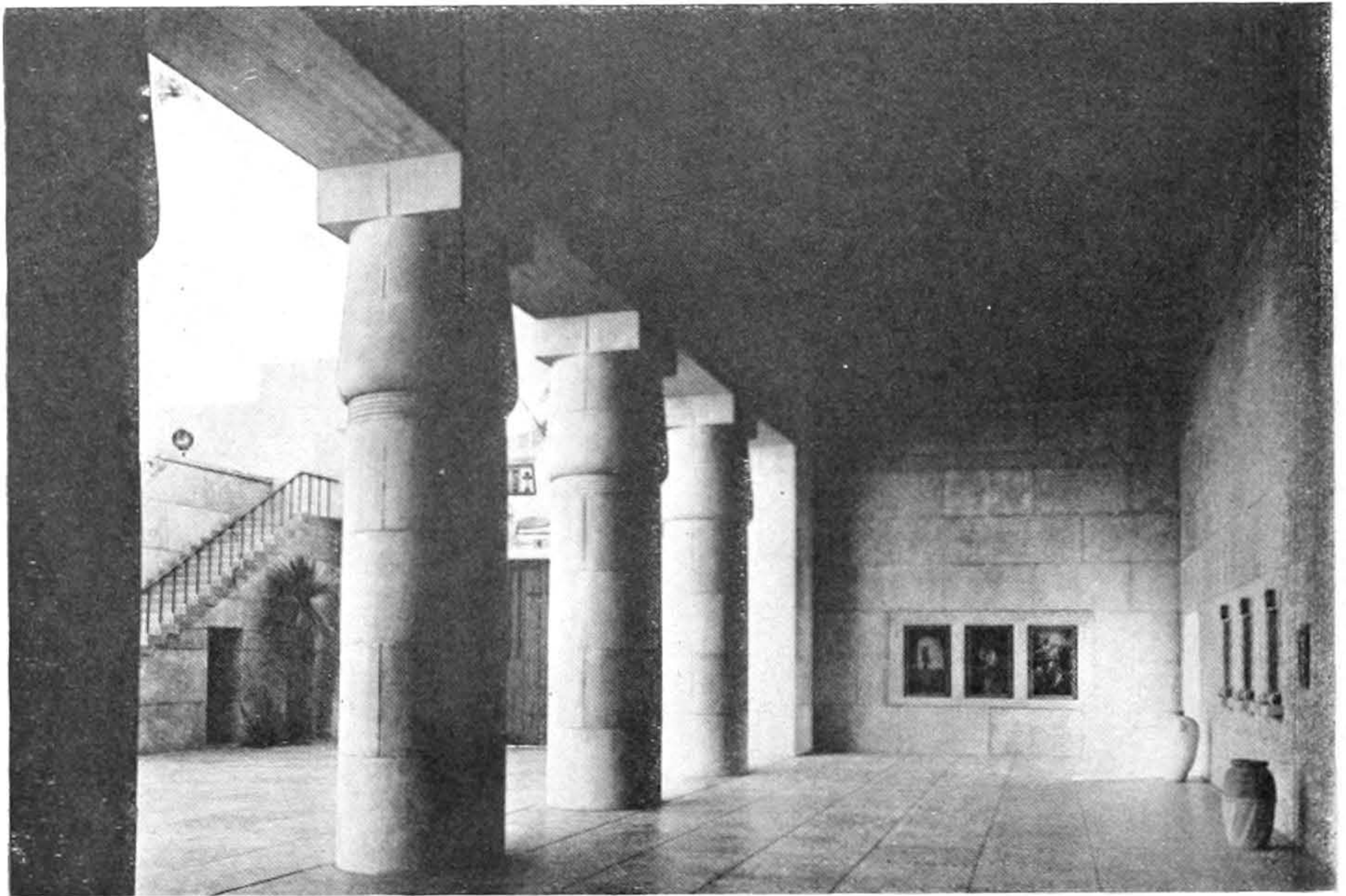


VIEW OF INTERIOR, GRAUMAN THEATER, HOLLYWOOD
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The film temple's auditorium is 114 feet wide and 118 feet long. The standard stage is 30 by 73½ feet, with a height from its floor to the underside of the gridiron of 54 feet. Seats are provided on the main floor for 1760 persons.

Beauty and safety were the two main objects that governed the designing of the Egyptian Theater. It is a Class A reinforced concrete structure throughout, and has hollow tile filler walls. From an engineering standpoint the building is especially interesting because of its two-plane roof construction. The wall between the high and low ceilings was particularly adapted to the location of a structural member, and the engineers made use of this wall by building it in the main carrying member of the roof. This is a large arch with a clear span of 114 feet, sustaining a load of 1,500,000 pounds, and designed on the elastic theory, as



ENTRANCE PORTICO, GRAUMAN THEATER, HOLLYWOOD
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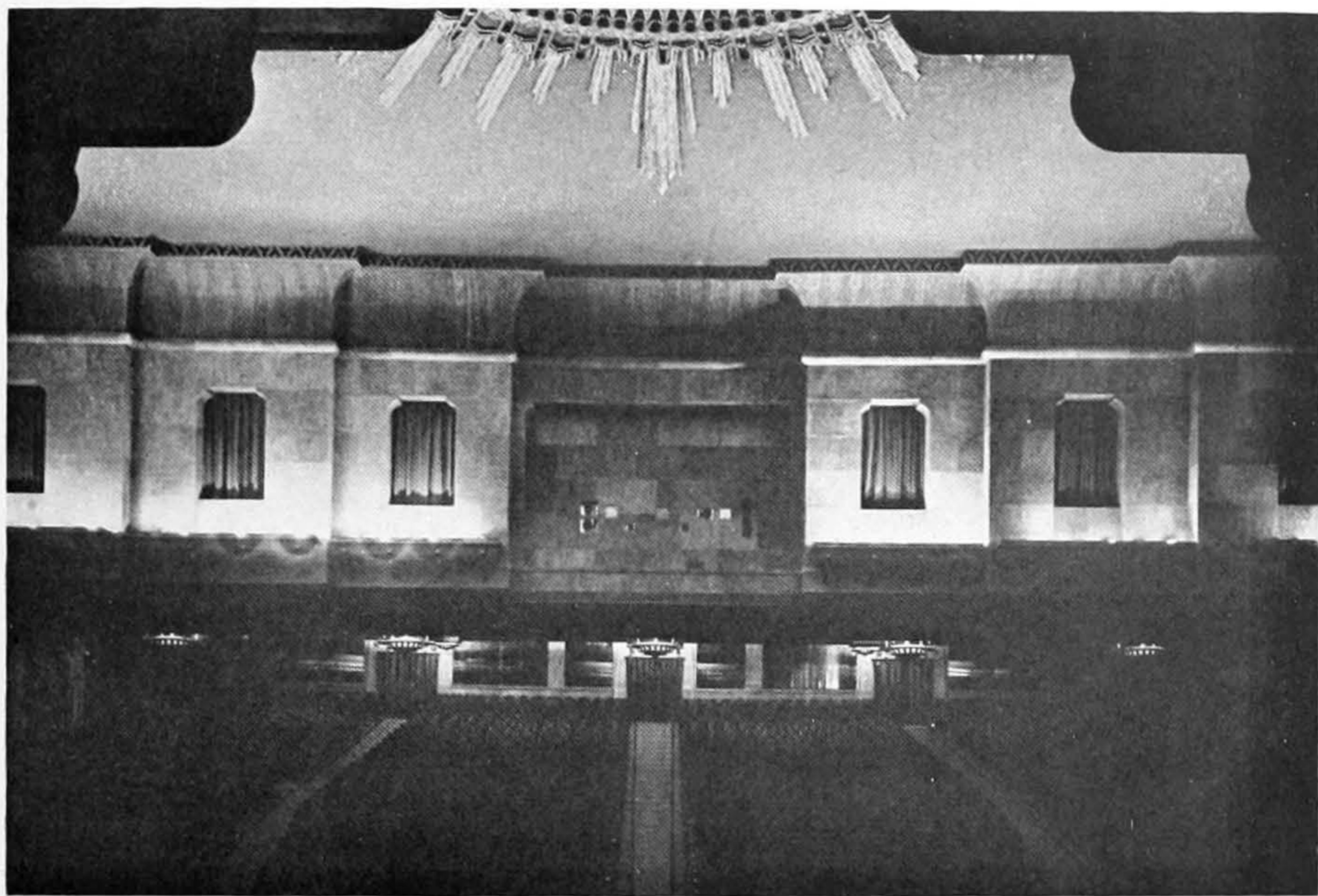
both a one-hinged and a two-hinged arch. This double precaution was taken to ensure safety during the possible occurrence of an earthquake.

The main arch, in turn, supports twelve lesser arches, six in the high roof and six in the low, the former being carried by a reinforced concrete truss directly in front of and over the proscenium arch, which also supports a chamber 15 by 56 feet, in which the magnificent Wurlitzer pipe organ is ensconced. This permits of an arrangement for diffusing the musical tones that is believed to be unsurpassed in any auditorium in the world.

The six trusses of the lower roof carry the projection room and fireproof film vault. The roof itself is supported on the bottom chords of the arches and creates a flat, box-like structure, which is very efficient in resisting any earth disturbance. The top chords of all the arches

are braced one to the other and to the building's walls by strut members, giving a very rigid frame, with the added advantage of being open to inspection at all times. The exposed sections of the arches have been waterproofed, and, being in a more or less perpendicular position, water or moisture cannot penetrate to the steel. The bottom chords of the arches, lying in the plane of the roof and covered only by the roofing paper, are exposed to practically the same temperature as the free standing top chords, so that temperature stresses are very nearly eliminated.

The theater is ventilated and heated or cooled by the best modern equipment, the system consisting of fans, motors and air washers. The air is drawn in through an intake some 60 feet above the street level, this being done to insure the purity of the azone, and is conveyed to the



INTERIOR GRAUMAN THEATER, HOLLYWOOD
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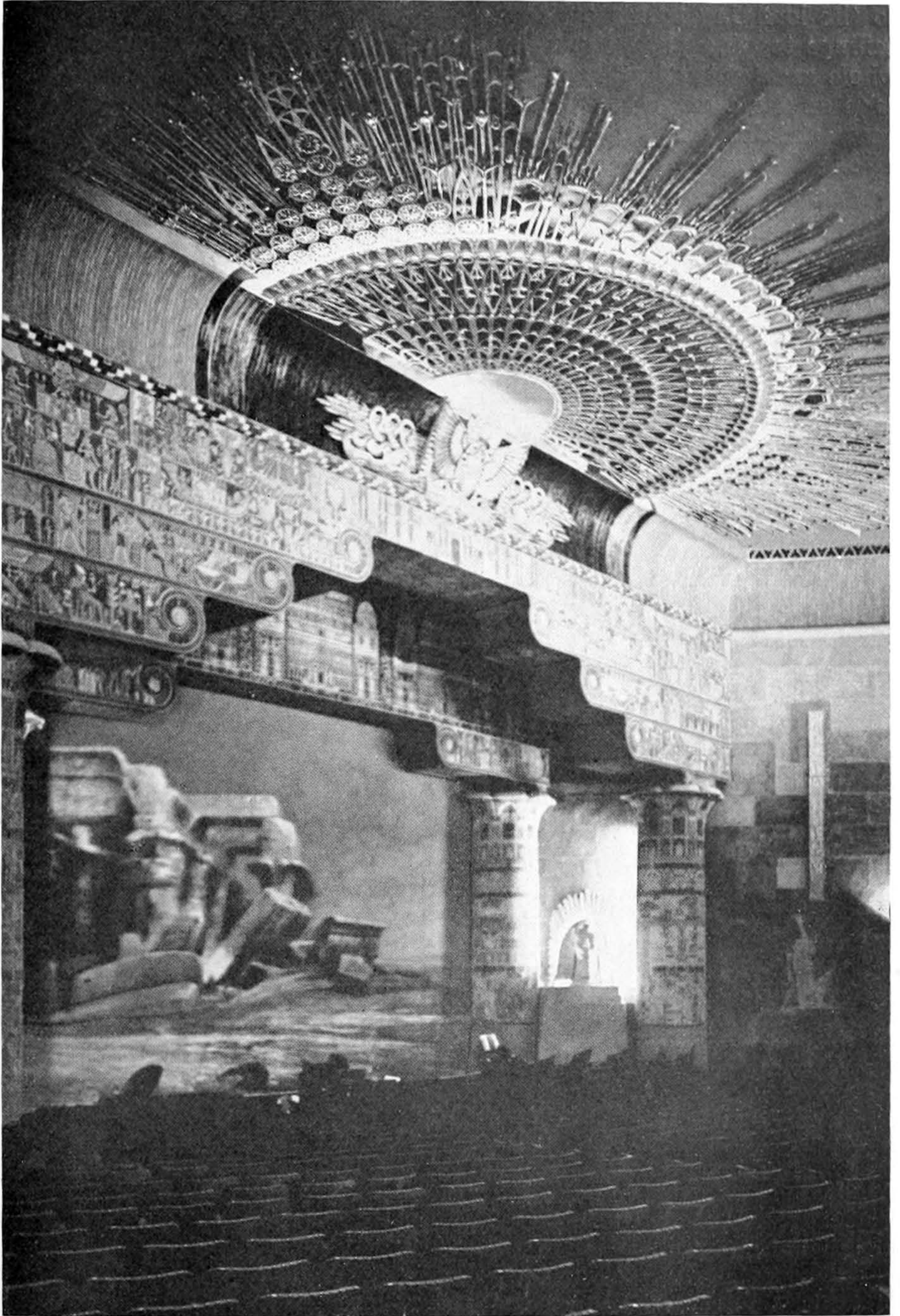
air washer through a column that is patterned after the famous obelisk known as Cleopatra's Needle, with its pointed top adding to the Egyptian architectural beauty of the film temple's exterior. After being cleansed in the washer, the air is conducted through coils for heating in winter or cooling in summer. When properly tempered, it is diffused through the building through ducts that connect with an adequate fan system.

The electric lighting of the theatre is in three colors, all controlled from a large dead-face switchboard situated on the stage. A three-dimmer system is connected with this, while the auxiliary and emergency lighting is supplied by a battery system located adjacent to the fan room.

One of the features of the new film temple, giving added lustre to its beauty, is the variety of vivid colors used. These rich hues extend



APPROACH TO THEATER, SHOWING FORECOURT AND SHOPS, GRAUMAN THEATER
HOLLYWOOD MEYER & HOLLER, ARCHITECTS



PROSCENIUM AND ORGAN GRILLE, GRAUMAN THEATER, HOLLYWOOD CALIFORNIA
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to the lounging rooms off the grand foyer, with their highly colored ceilings topping plain stone walls, and are to be found throughout the whole architectural scheme. The color effects show to especial advantage on the columns, six feet in diameter, that flank the stage. Each bears striking carvings symbolic of festivities and ceremonials in vogue among the ancient Egyptians.