



Top of the Greater Majestic office and theatre building, an 18-story structure in stone, showing Karl Hoblitzelle's pent house studio and sign which is visible for 50 miles.

GREATER MAJESTIC IN SAN ANTONIO IS NEWEST ADDITION TO INTERSTATE CIRCUIT

Luxurious Theatre Seating 4,000 Features Atmospheric Style Throughout

THAT most daring exponent of the romantic in theatre architecture—the so-called atmospheric Theatre—was submitted to a new test and, according to reliable sources of information, came through with flying colors when the opening of the new Greater Majestic Theatre in San Antonio was made the occasion of an International celebration in which delegations representing various Mexican organizations and officials of San Antonio's civic and social groups participated.

The new theatre, built and to be operated as one of the key houses in the circuit controlled by the Interstate Amusement Company, is in an atmospheric style based on Mexican Cloister architecture. This strictly modern application of artistic productions originating in the old world encountered no opposition on traditional grounds in its various manifestations throughout the cities of the United States, as evidenced by its sudden rise to general popularity. Now it ventures to the very scene of the origins of the artistic conceptions adapted to its realistic imitation.

Designed by John Eberson

The Greater Majestic was designed by John Eberson. It was opened June 14 amid gala demonstrations, attended by a delegation of Mexican officials including Gen. Jose M. Tapia, chief of staff of the Mexican Government, representing President Gil and Enrique Santibanez, consul general of Mexico in San Antonio.

The theatre is housed in an 18-story office building located on Houston street. It has 4,000 seats in an auditorium having two balconies. The upper balcony is reserved for the colored patronage and is reached by separate stairways and elevator through a separate lobby entrance.

Observation of the photographs reproduced on this and adjoining pages reveal the many details of the atmosphere surrounding the original models for the design that have

been incorporated in this modern recreation of Mexican Cloister architecture.

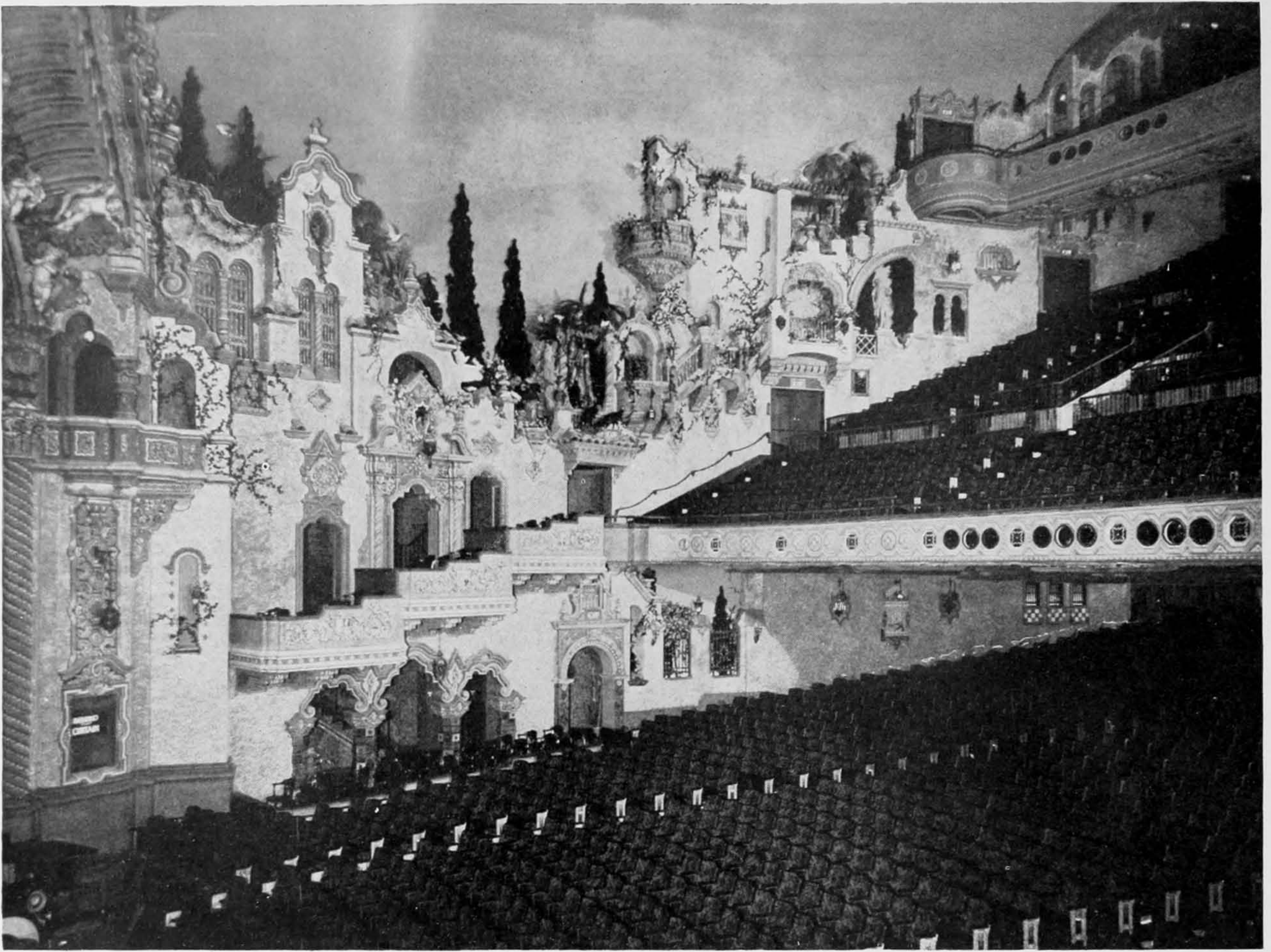
The photo at the top of this page shows the pent house studio apartment which surmounts the eighteen-story building. This was designed for Karl Hoblitzelle, head of the Interstate Amusement Company, and contains complete living quarters and private roof garden.

Exterior of Brick and Stone

The exterior is of brick and stone. The facade is of stone of a color and designed to capitalize the intensity of light to create interesting shadow effects. Above the marquee is a balcony to serve as an outdoor cafe. A permanent canopy executed in cast iron and copper, covers the entire sidewalk, a feature which provides much needed shade and welcome protection from the sun.

The waiting lobby offers a splendid example of the original productions. Particularly interesting is the combination ceramic and faience tile floor and the novel feature located at the extreme end of this room. This is a giant wall aquarium, illuminated from behind and above. The drape at top covers the surface water line, thus giving an effect of a submarine view composed of plants and swimming fishes of various species.

The auditorium reproduces a garden scene. Comparison of the photographs showing the right and left sides of the auditorium reveals the treatment which is a feature of the atmospheric auditoriums designed by John Eberson. The two sides of the auditorium from rear walls to the proscenium arch are entirely different in design, giving added variety to the scene unfolded before the spectator. The decorative treatment represents in detail many outstanding features of Mexican and Andalusian architecture. The reproduction is emphasized by a wealth of enhancing atmosphere created by the foliage, statuary, banners, stunt pigeons, peacocks and parrots. Indirect lighting on walls and ceiling complete the elements which make for the outdoor illusion.



Above, left sidewall treatment, auditorium, showing wealth of detail used to build up the atmospheric effect. At the right is a view of the auditorium rear showing under-balcony treatment and grand foyer staircase leading up to an oval cloistered promenade on the mezzanine level.

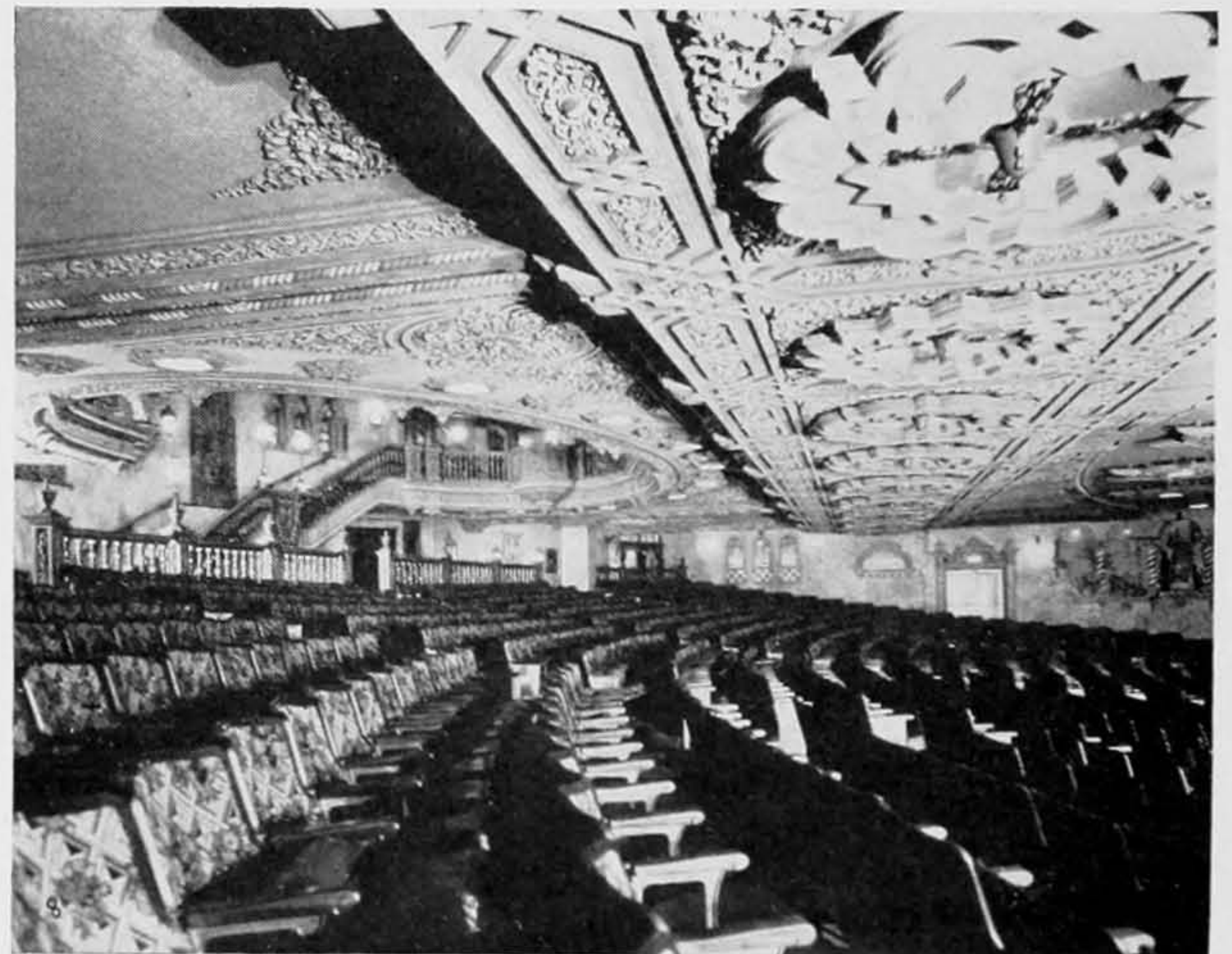
The proscenium arch, as shown in the photographic reproduction, is featured by unusually elaborate decoration. Its design shows the influence of Austrian Baroque on Spanish-Mexican architecture. At either side of the arch are singers' balconies, reached by stairs from the stage. Also worthy of note is the complete asymmetry of the bell towers in this proscenium arch construction.

Public Address System

Centered at the peak of the arch is a decorative screen enclosing the horns for the public address system which has been installed in the Greater Majestic. There are four loud-speaker horn units in this installation, used for amplification of music and speech from the stage.

Among the features of particular interest in the lobbies and foyers of this luxurious house is the main fountain located in the main lobby, illustrated in a close-up view reproduced in connection with this article. This is built around a prominent recent work of sculpture called "Sweet Grapes," a bronze statue on a revolving table with an art mosaic illuminated shell for a background. The mural depicting in vivid colors a Mexican parrot jungle executed by Mrs. Edith Hartman may be observed above the fountain in this photo.

In equipment the Greater Majestic ranks among the most luxuriously appointed theatres in the world. In addition to its public address system, there is a complete installation for the presentation of sound pictures, projection room equipment of the newest design, elevating organ

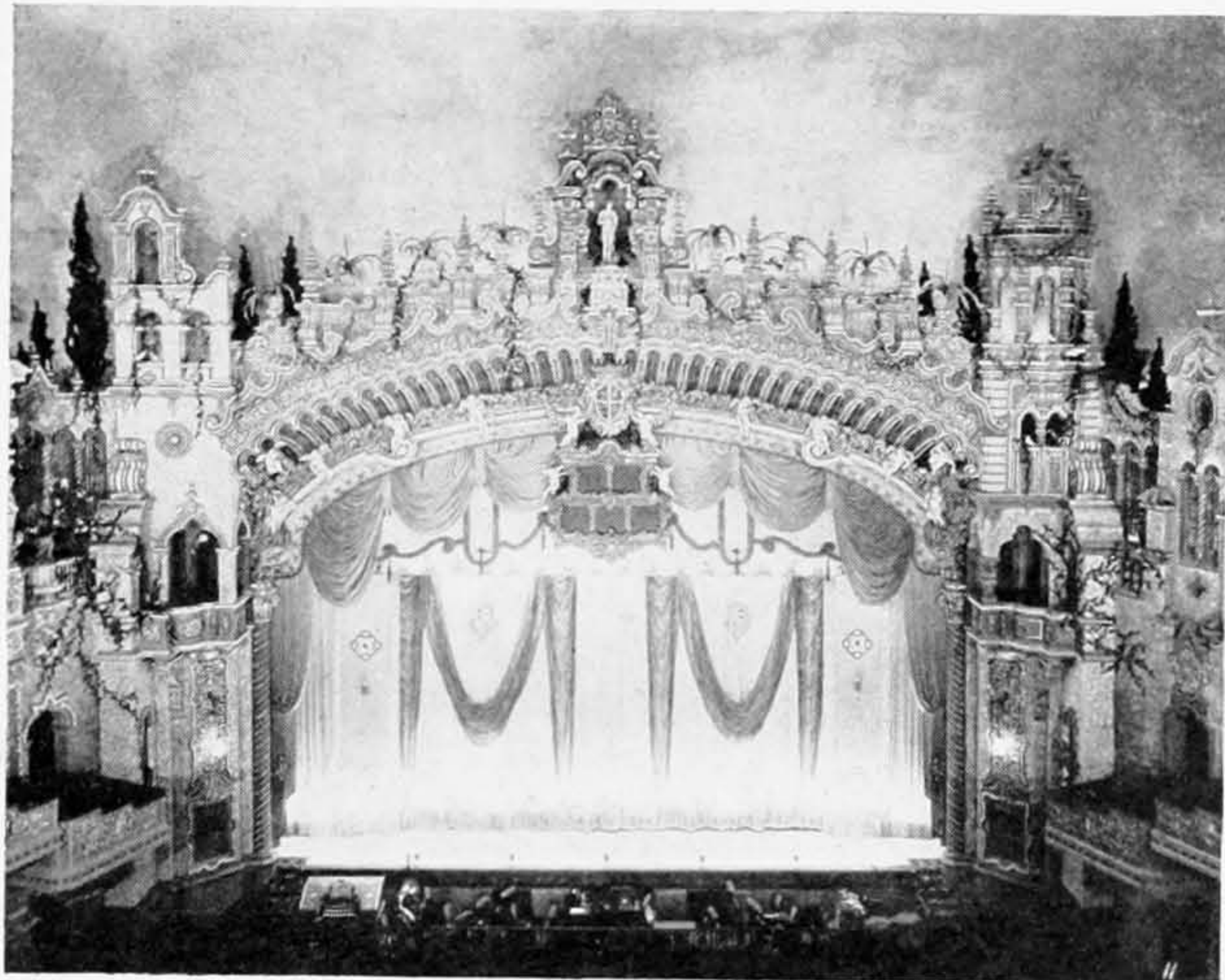
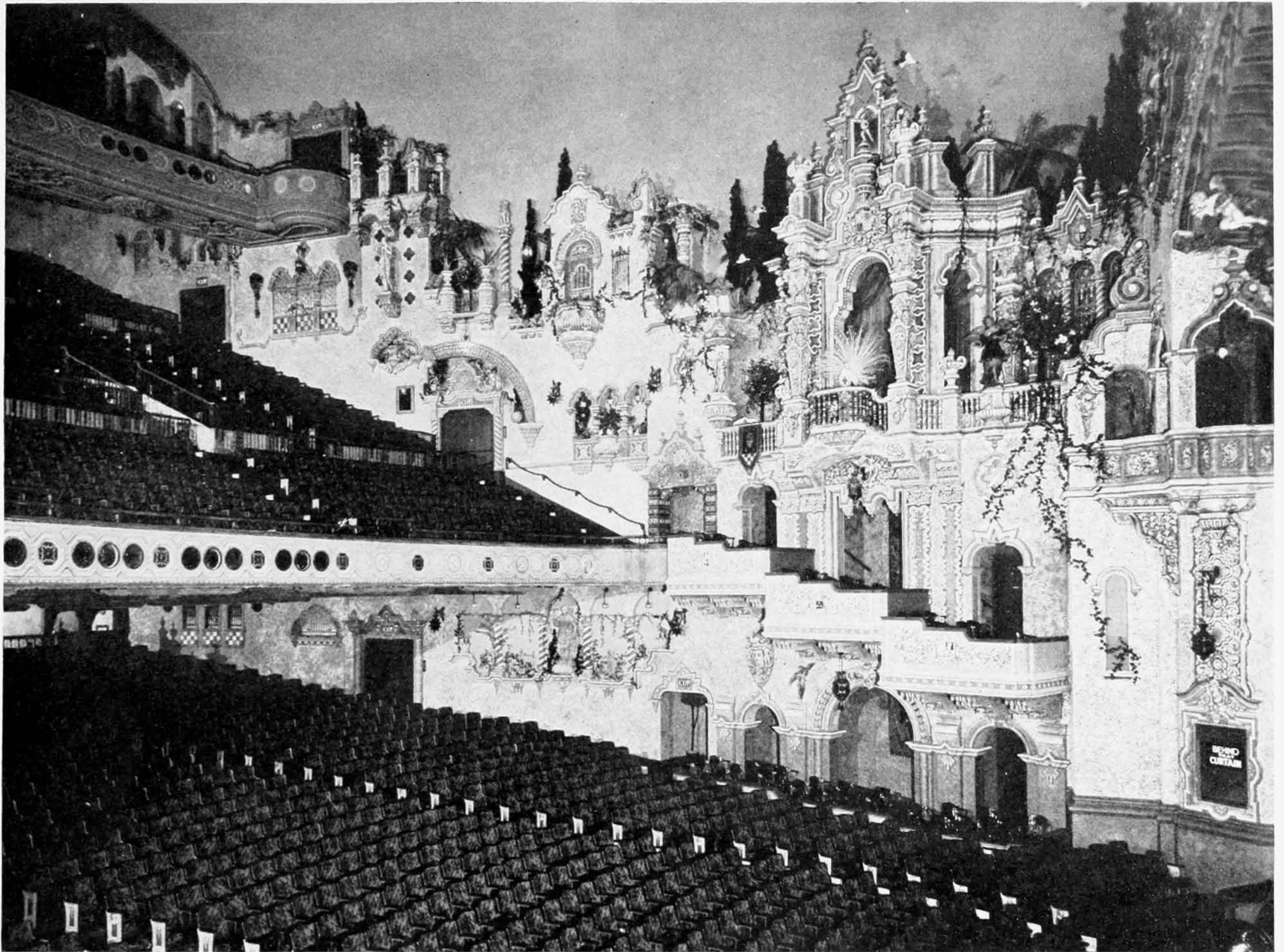


and orchestra lifts and multi-color lighting plants, in addition to an elaborate heating and ventilating plant.

The theatre chairs are upholstered with a tapestry fabric incorporating the predominating colors carried throughout the auditorium. These are black, orange and red, as the principal colors used in the interior decoration.

Acoustical treatment was provided for in the original plans covering the ceiling construction and design of the sidewalls. A special acoustical plaster was used on the vaulted ceiling.

Elevators have been installed for both the main auditorium and the colored balcony. This is one of the few theatres in America with elevators for patrons in the balcony and mezzanine floors. The lifts are large and



Above, right sidewall, auditorium. Comparison with photo opposite shows the totally different treatment of the sidewalls. At left, proscenium arch, showing influence of the Austrian Baroque in Spanish-Mexican architecture. Note singers' balcony on right and left and a complete asymmetry of the bell towers.

conveniently located and make trips to the upper floors constantly.

The men's smoking room has been fitted for the comfort of masculine patrons. Large overstuffed chairs and davenports have been placed for lounging and smoking. There is an attendant present at all times to care for the needs of patrons.

The ladies parlor is furnished with everything that is necessary for comfort and convenience. A maid is in attendance to administer to the needs of patrons.

The mezzanine floor has large lounges where patrons can wait for an appointment or rest while waiting for a seat in the auditorium of the theatre. On this same floor there is a check room for wraps, hats, umbrellas, or pack-

ages. This is a service extended to patrons for their convenience.

Public telephones and telegraph service are two of the minor details which add to the enjoyment of a theatre and the entertainment program offered there.

About forty Spanish cypress trees imported from Italy are used as the main background for the architecture in the auditorium. About ten South American palms are used to advantage in the decorative scheme. There also are orange, azalea, magnolia and oleander trees, braced plants, blooming cactus, grape and rose bushes, and many Texas blue bonnets.

One of the largest collections of stuffed birds in Texas is to be found in the Theatre Majestic. The largest and most beautiful of the collection is a white peacock with a spreading tail measuring more than 10 feet across and standing more than 10 feet high.

There are a score or more of white doves in natural poses. Some of the birds have been wired and arranged in such a manner as to give the impression of full flight against the blue of the sky. Others of the white doves are taking off in the start of flight.

Exterior Electrical Display

The vertical sign on Houston Street on the front of the building has a brilliance of 114,700 candlepower coming from 2,400 lamps. It is the largest theatrical sign in the South. It is 76 feet high, 14 feet wide at the top and tapers to 8 feet at the base. Attached to the base is a scroll work 12 feet wide and fitted with special lights.



*Above, fountain, main lobby
Below, the waiting lobby*

There is another huge sign with a double face on the roof. This sign has a brilliance of 74,400 candlepower, coming from 1280 lamps, totaling 24,000 watts. These signs can be seen from as great a distance as the verticle signs because of their double facing and height.

Three thousand five hundred gallons of water a minute is the capacity for the well which will supply the needs of the theatre and office building.

The well is 1,000 feet deep. A tank with a capacity of 35,500 gallons of water is on the roof. This is equal to 300 barrels. Water is pumped at all times to the roof where enough pressure is assured to give adequate pressure all over the structure.

City water has been piped into the building to be used in emergencies. This precaution is taken in all of the city's buildings having private wells.

The three-color lighting system is controlled by a multi-pre-set switchboard of large capacity. It is a 10 scene board mounted back stage, from which a variety of effects in the auditorium as well as the stage can be controlled. Also included in the equipment is an emergency lighting plant, with automatic switching facilities to the secondary fuses in the event of failure of the main fuses or lighting lines, and a third plant to supply emergency light in the event of power current failure. Effect machines in the booth and spots for stage presentations and the cloud effect machines for creating the realistic sky effects which feature atmospheric auditoriums are provided in the lighting equipment.

The policy of the Greater Majestic is vaudeville and motion pictures. The house is under the management of Raymond Willis, director of the interests of the Interstate Amusement Company in San Antonio.

