

THE WARNER IN SAN PEDRO

THE WARNER theatre in San Pedro, Cal., a city practically created out of Los Angeles' development of its own Pacific harbor, represents, besides a really pretentious addition to the expanding Warner Brothers circuit, another expression of that new school of theatre architecture which, while still accepting the theatricalism of the period design, is attempting to reinterpret it in modern lines and materials.

The Warner in San Pedro is Old Mediterranean in mood, but this spirit comes to life in metal and glass and modern building compositions wrought into a pattern that is interpretative of Italy's sunny gayety, rather than imitative of Italy's own architecture. As such, this Warner house is typical of the later work of its creator, B. Marcus Priteca, Los Angeles architect.

The exterior presents the only treatment that is at all directly representative of this Mediterranean influence, and of

Another addition to the Warner Brothers circuit erected at a cost of \$500,000 in that chain's current construction program, at San Pedro, Los Angeles' Harbor district

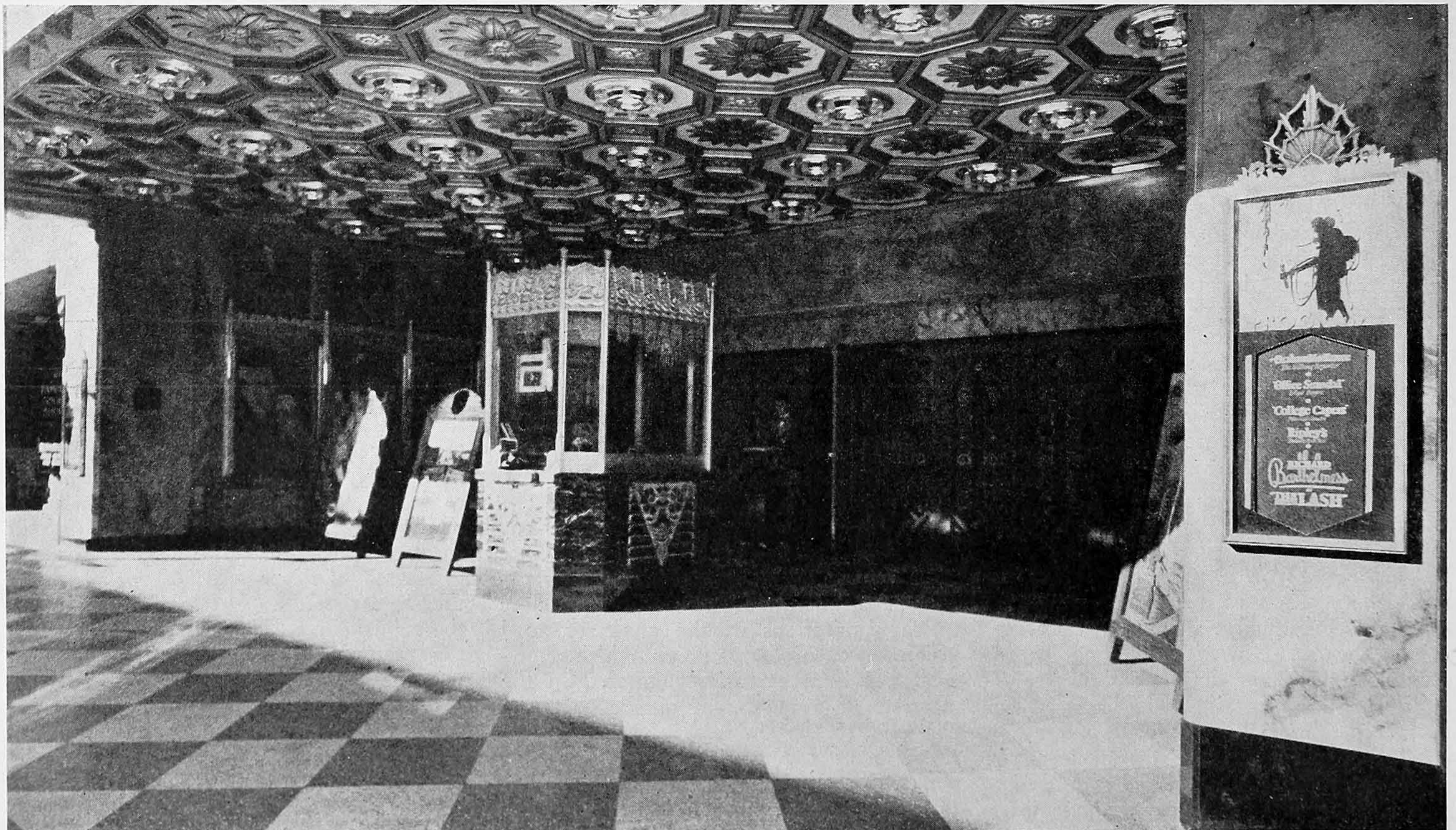
course its squareness, its plain surfaces embellished but slightly with scrolls pressed into the stucco finish, its brightly striped awnings colorful against the whiteness of the structure, has an appropriateness in Southern California that is contemporary as well as historical.

The vestibule is trimmed in silver and other metallic effects, while the entrance doors, of mahogany done in many panels, is decoratively treated with gold leaf. The ceiling is octagonally coffered and studded with myriad lights.

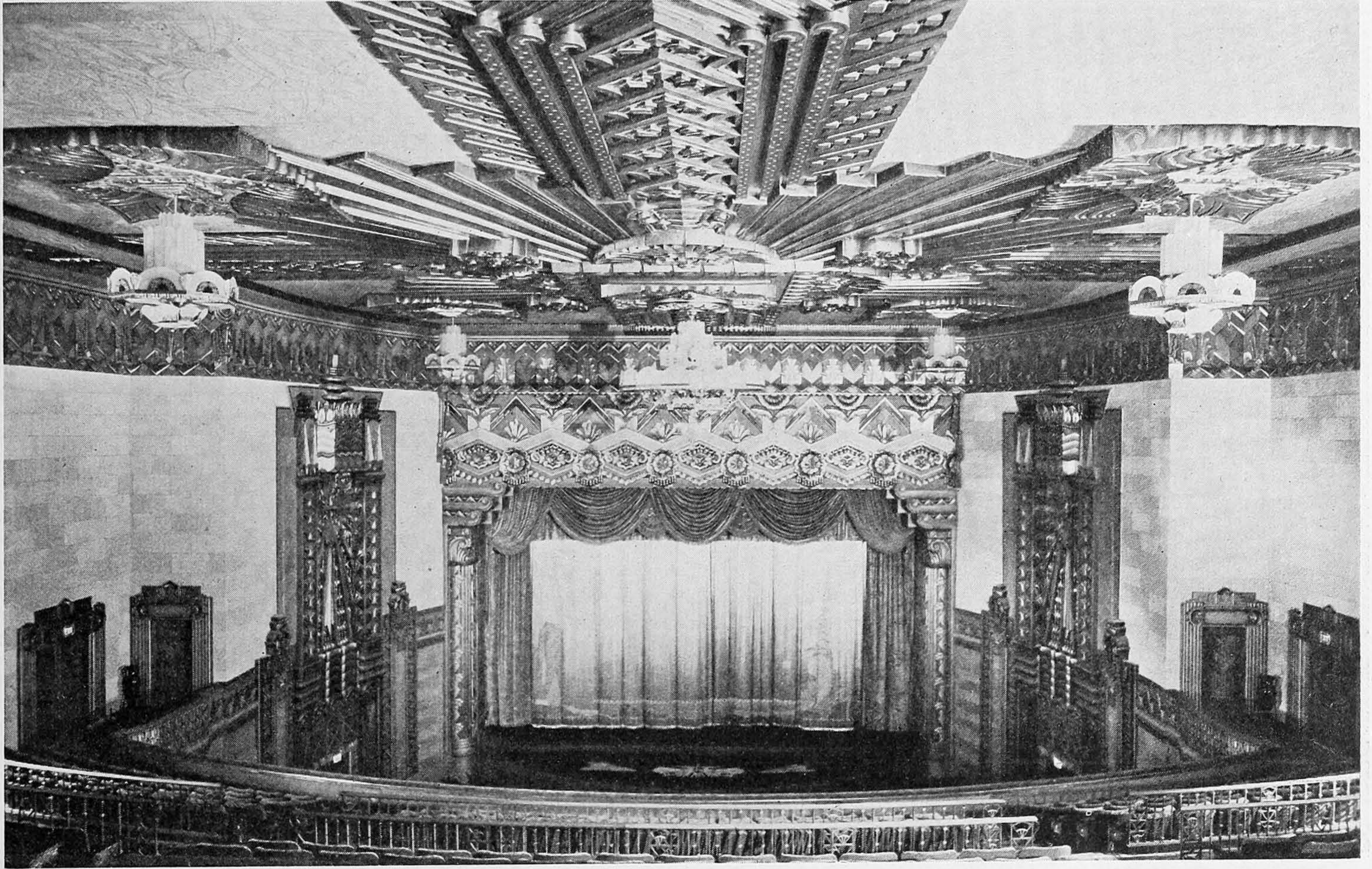
The lobby is beamed, each beam carry-

ing in relief a plastic decorative treatment of individual allegorical theme, the whole depicting the advance of theatre arts from the beginning to the present. A double grand staircase leads from the lobby to the mezzanine promenade and balcony and also to the main lounge.

THE AUDITORIUM is dominated by an architectural colonnade representing ancient stone. The material used is sound-absorbing. This colonnade or arcade almost encompasses this chamber of 2,000 seats located on two levels. Surmounting this is a cornice and ceiling of metallic surfaces in a pattern representing a great carpet. Besides lighting fixtures, this glittering expanse, glinting gold, silver and other metallic hues, is pointed with rich, reflective ornamental details, making a pattern geometric with straight line and angle, for the most part, but bright with color and reflected light.



The vestibule, showing the octagonally coffered ceiling studded with lights.



View of the auditorium, looking toward the proscenium arch from the balcony.

The ceiling treatment has a central feature from which the rest emanates. From this is suspended an immense chandelier, and at symmetrical intervals, secondary features are similarly treated on a smaller scale. The metallic composition forming the decoration is highly reflective.

The balcony of the Warner in San Pedro follows the modern tendency in being really a compromise between the old type of high, steep balcony and the latter day mezzanine level. It has a relatively small climb and is relatively low. Six hundred can be seated here.

The proscenium arch measures 50 feet wide and 30 feet high. The projection room is large and is equipped with four projectors, besides the usual complement of stereopticons and effect machines.

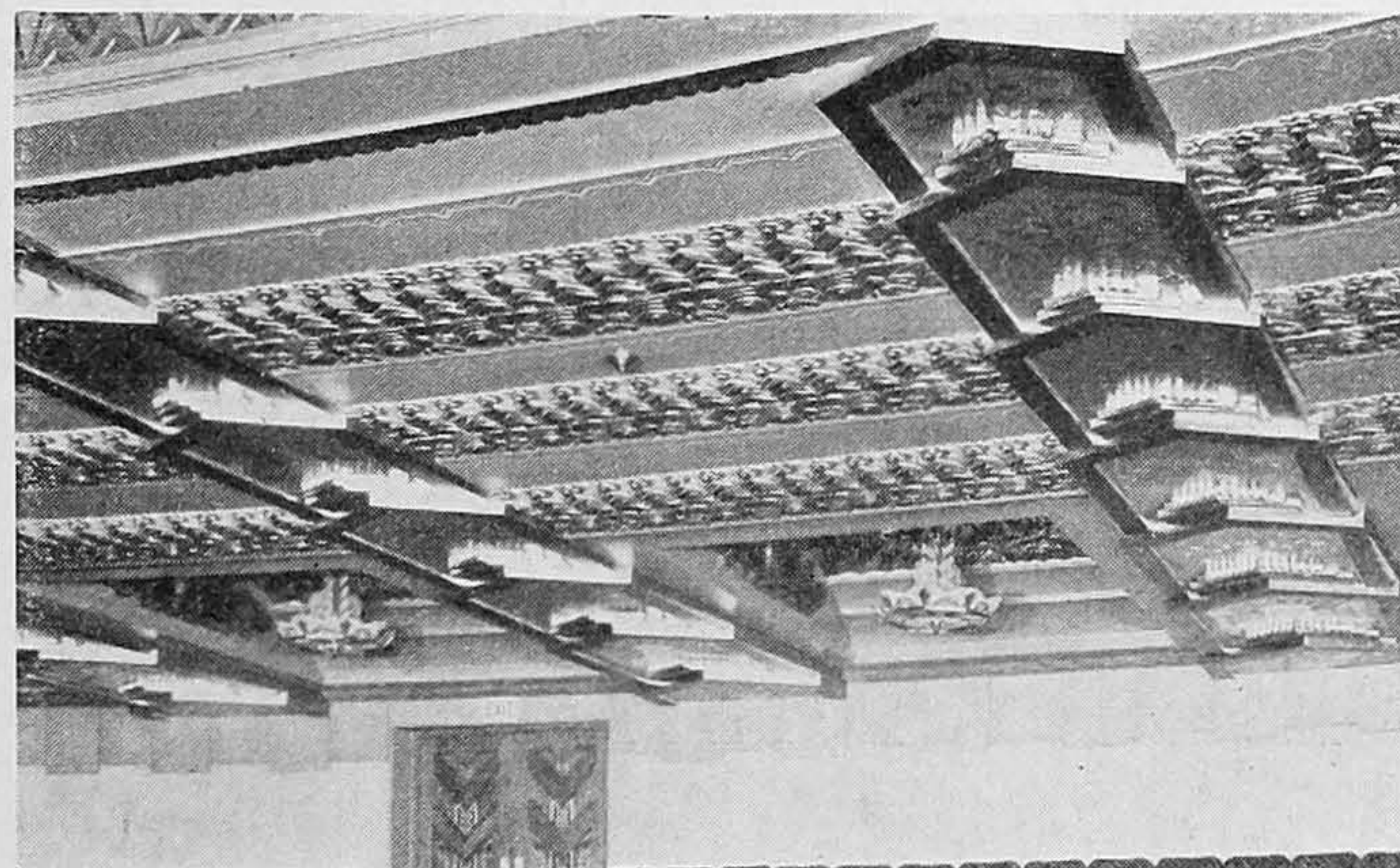
The ventilation system provides for a complete change of air every 10 min-

utes, assuring 35 cubic feet of air a minute to each person at capacity. The spray-wash system is used.

The Warner in San Pedro has a policy of continuous performances on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays from 2 o'clock until 11, and week-day schedules calling for

one matinee daily and two evening performances. Programs are changed twice weekly, Sunday and Wednesday. Top prices are 25c for week-day matinees, and 50c in the evening; 30c for Saturday matinees, and 50c for all other week-end or holiday performances.

The theatre is under the house managership of Fred Crow.



Detail of treatment beneath the balcony.

CIRCUMSTANCES surrounding the creation of this theatre in a city which has sprung into being almost like the proverbial mushroom, offer familiar yet unusually illuminating instruction in an extraordinary kind of showmanship. It springs from what must be a natural interest of the public in the theatre. It chooses to regard show business as glamorous. The wise theatre operator, erecting a new house, will take advantage of the



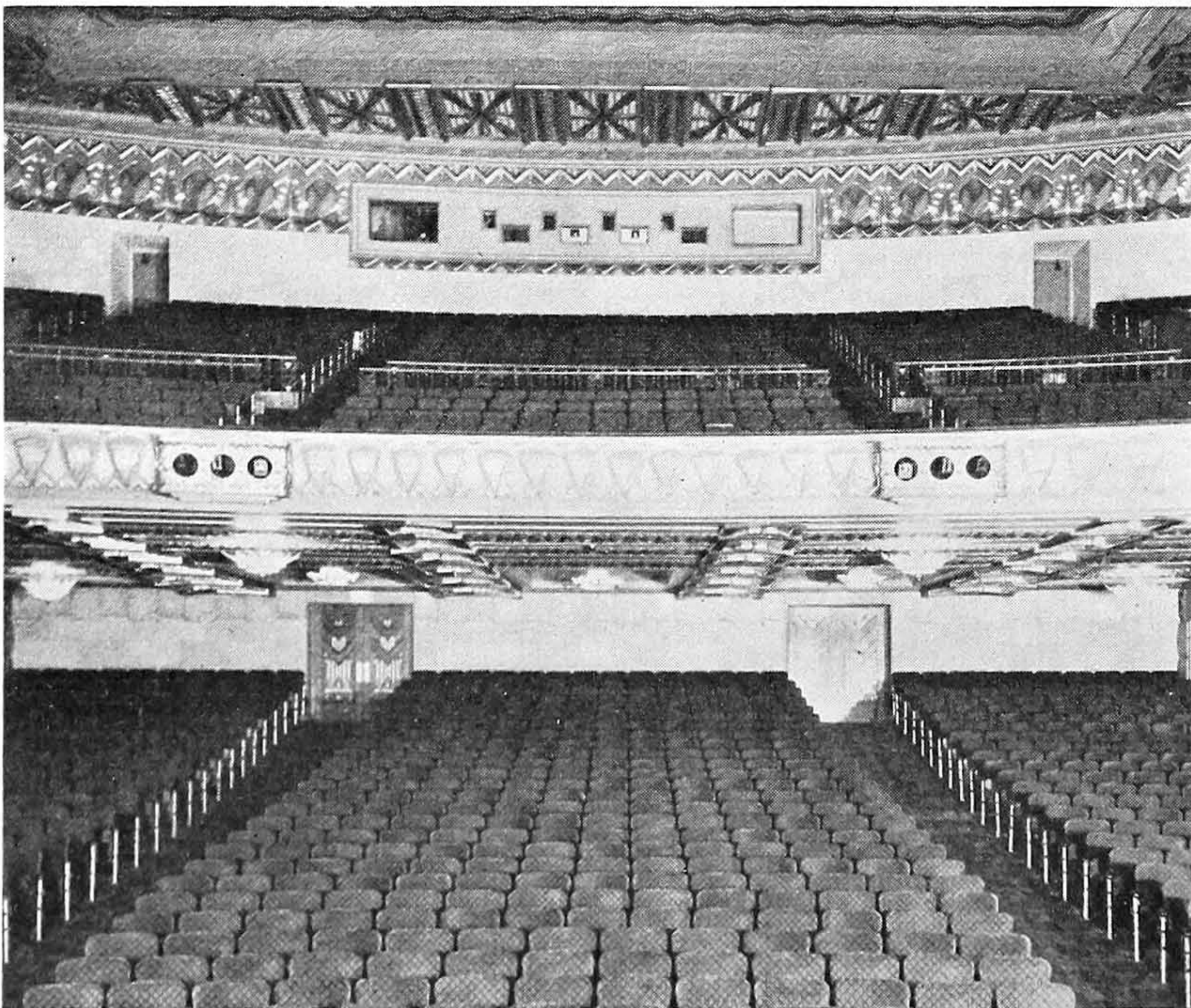
attitude. The example that San Pedro affords is evidenced in the following account in that city's newspaper, the *News-Pilot*, referring to the breaking of ground that began the project:

"That was an historic day in San Pedro, as more than 500 citizens from all points in the harbor district gathered for the short and informal program. Speaking through a loudspeaker, executives of the company and many prominent San Pedrans gave glowing accounts of what the new theatre meant to this community.

"With a huge steam shovel standing as a background with a packed circle of citizens watching, Jack Milton Warner, son of J. L. Warner, vice president in charge of production, turned the first shovel of dirt, officially marking commencement of construction activities.

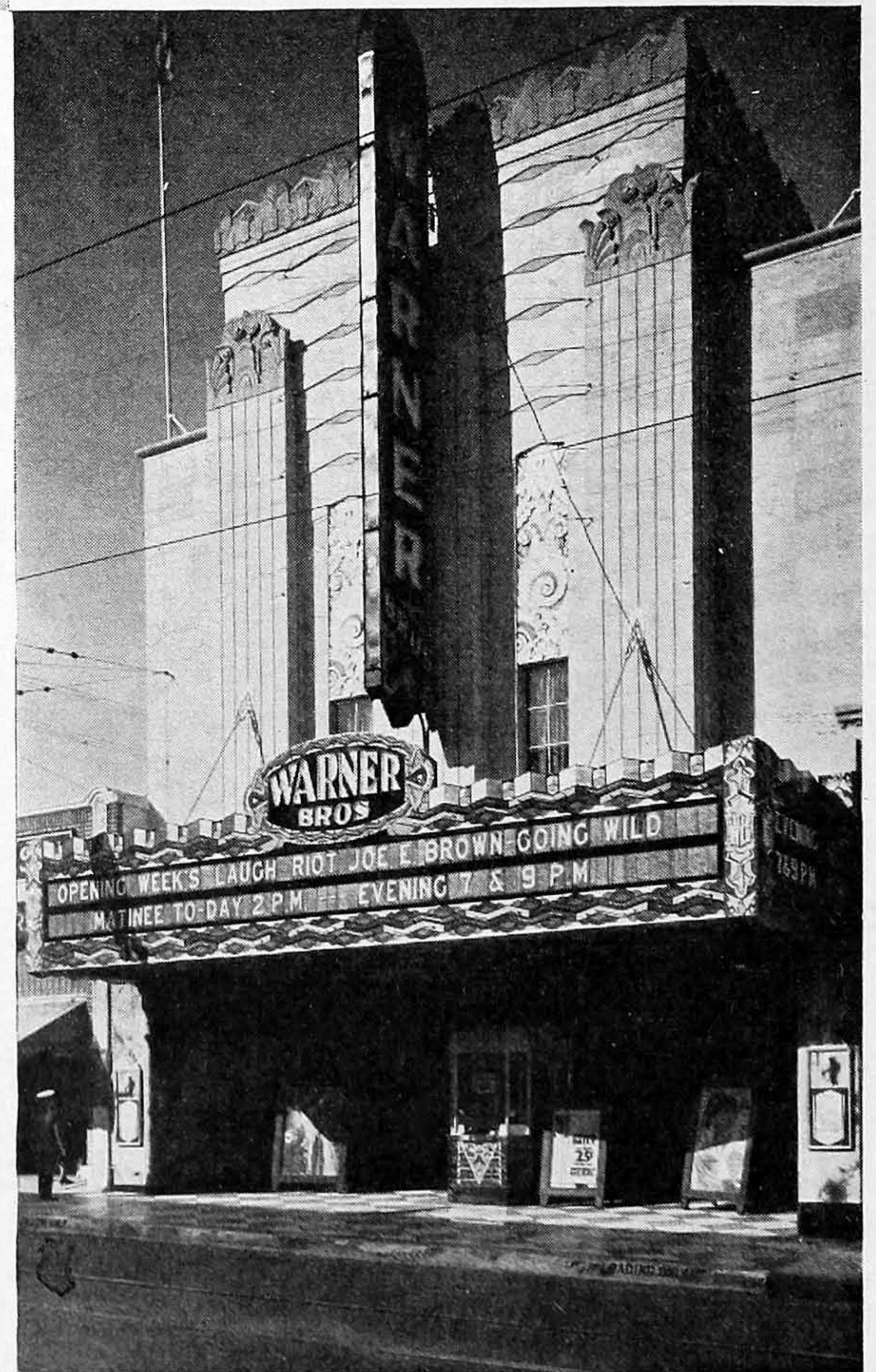
"A contagious spirit of enthusiasm ran through the crowd as Chamber of Commerce officials, company leaders and the score of screen luminaries present turned a shovel of dirt 'for luck' while a Warner Brothers camera recorded the event on everlasting film.

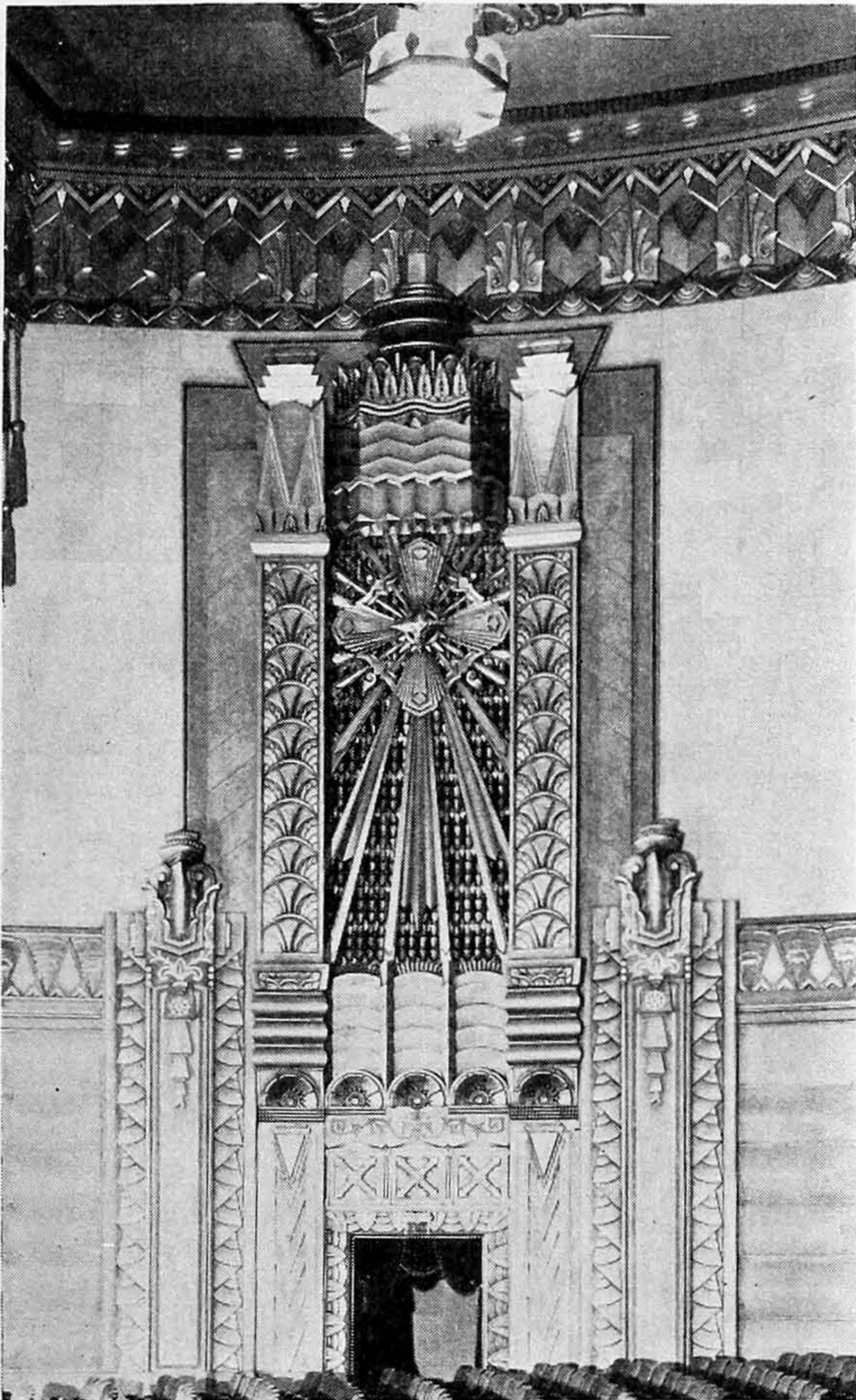
Below: The facade, finished in white stucco restrainedly embellished with cornice and plaque patterns pressed into the material.



Upper view: Along the mezzanine promenade, which serves as a lounge as well as means of access to the balcony level.

Lower view: View through middle section of the auditorium to the rear, showing low position of the balcony and its gentle ascent.





Above: Detail of decorative treatment at the proscenium and organ loft, done in metal-like surfaces finished in metal colors.

Upper view: Landing from which leads a double main stairway, giving access to both the mezzanine and to the main lounge.

Lower view: General view of the lobby, spacious and modernistically appointed. The main stairway is shown at the left.



"The enthusiasm noted that day indicated renewed faith in San Pedro, a faith that echoed in the number of short talks that were given. Councilman A. E. Henning declared on that occasion that 'this major development in the harbor district is of great significance to San Pedro people, for no company nor man would invest \$500,000 in any community unless its future was assured.'

"President Leslie C. Mott and Secretary R. H. Beaton of the San Pedro Chamber, welcomed Warner Brothers to San Pedro, as did George C. Aitkenhead, H. L. Campbell, president of the San Pedro Realty Board, and Lieut. Col. Carr W. Waller."

"During the past months," proudly reflects the *News-Pilot*, "San Pedrans have seen the great reinforced concrete walls rise to an impressive height. Through rain and shine, the crew of 100 workmen kept to a rigid schedule in order to bring to San Pedro its greatest of showhouses as soon as possible."

Showmanship, verily, begins with the turning of the first shovelful of dirt.