

North London's Wonder Theatre

The Latest of the Astorias

The Astoria, Finsbury Park, which will open on September 29th, may well claim to be the last word in construction, comfort and entertainment. Its completion marks the crowning point of a most ambitious scheme, in which it was the definite intention of the board of directors of the Astoria chain to open in Greater London four of the largest and most up-to-date super cinemas in the United Kingdom, if not in Europe, within 12 months. The already opened sister theatres of the Finsbury Park Astoria are those at Brixton, Old Kent Road and Streatham.

Biggest of the Four

THE BIOSCOPE is now able to publish more complete details of this latest and greatest of the Astoria chain, which has been designed on most original yet dignified lines by E. A. Stone, F.S.I. A general reference to the theatre was published in these columns on September 10th.

The theatre, which occupies an extraordinarily fine island site at the corner of Seven Sisters Road and Isledon Road, overlooks one of the busiest traffic centres in London. Bus routes from every part of North London pass its door, and it is exactly opposite the Finsbury Park Underground Station, and is only 10 minutes from the West End. Full advantage has been taken of the island site to permit of properly supervised car parks on either side of the building.

The front elevation of the theatre is definitely modern—in fact, almost severe in its simplicity of line. The facia has been carried out in cream and dull glazed tiles, which at night will be most strikingly illuminated. Although ample provision has been made on the frontage for advertising spaces, they are part of the original design, and will in no way detract from the beauty and simplicity of the façade.

A Carefully Built Illusion

The vast interior has been designed throughout on Spanish lines, and throughout the whole theatre this beautiful atmosphere has been created and maintained.

Past the pay boxes, which are fitted with the most up-to-date and efficient change and ticket giving machines, the patrons enter the spacious vestibule which has been designed in the form of an octagonal courtyard. The whole is commanded by a central fountain of dull green and gold mosaic, standing on eight pillars. Above, a balcony with decorative iron railings overlooks the fountain, and high above is the domed

ceiling with its brilliant scarlet and blue mosaic. An unusual effect has been obtained by the inclusion of little kiosks for the sale of iced drinks, chocolates and cigarettes in the walls of the courtyard.

Up the stairs, the circle patron will approach the balcony seats by way of the

of this lovely Spanish landscape theatre await them.

The auditorium is entirely novel in its conception and wonderful in its execution, whilst the roof span is claimed to be the greatest in the world.

Above stretches the Mediterranean blue sky, where stars twinkle or the sun shines, according to the will of the chief electrician. When the fire curtain (which is part of the landscape effect) is lowered, the illusion is complete. Two great old stone towers flank the proscenium arch right and left, joined above by a realistic upper story of a quaint turreted building complete with windows (with green shutters) and practical doors which lead on to the artistic iron railed balcony. To right and left of the proscenium arch there straggle away, in uneven line, the brilliant roofs of quaint old-fashioned houses

A Decorative Operating Box

Fascinating little stone stairs leading to "behind the scenes" appear here and there; miniature courtyards and fountains, trailing flowering plants and sun-kissed trees all help to complete the illusion.

At the back of the circle one glimpses another little house with brilliantly illuminated windows—the operating box, the apertures of which have been cleverly blended into this unusual decorative scheme. The promenade at the back of the circle resembles a stone balustraded terrace.

The luxurious organ has been made by John Compton and has two consoles—one in the orchestra pit and the other (which is mobile) on the stage. The organ chamber is above the proscenium arch, and is hidden by one of the quaint shuttered windowed houses which form part of the decorative scheme.

Lavish Stage Appointments

The orchestra pit, which is of ample proportions, being both deep and wide, will accommodate a large orchestra. The stage, which is probably unique in its dimensions, is as wide as that at Drury Lane Theatre, and has been fitted with the most up-to-date counter-weighting system for the rapid removal of scenery, and the most modern lighting equipment. Some of the most beautifully equipped dressing rooms, band rooms and staff rooms ever incorporated in any theatre have been installed, whilst a large scenery dock equipped with the most modern devices is also a feature.

A further unique feature of the theatre is the two complete ventilating and heating systems which have been installed; it is



The latest of the Astorias raises a bald but impressive frontage at Finsbury Park; but its severe exterior is more than compensated for by the luxury of its appointments

promenade leading to the tea lounge, vast in its area and daring in its decorative scheme. Moorish architecture is suggested by the windows, whilst the ceiling is of solid gold. The balcony approach gives a foretaste of the wonders of the auditorium. The ceiling is deep blue "sky," whilst the fringe of quaint tiles breaking the wall above one's head emphasises the courtyard impression. Through artistic wall apertures one can glimpse to the right the sun-bathed hills rolling away in the distance, whilst ahead one overlooks the little town of which one now feels almost a part—a Spanish town, with warmth and splendour and romance. Then through the modern swing doors to the circle.

Stalls patrons descend half-a-dozen broad shallow steps to the vast waiting hall—and thence to the stalls, where all the wonders

THE FIRST ENGLISH FACTORY EVER BUILT SPECIALLY FOR MANUFACTURING CINEMATOGRAPH APPARATUS

W. VINTEN, LTD., have moved into their new factory, for which the above description is claimed. A spacious building, situated on an important main road (chosen because of its central position between Wardour Street and the Studios) fitted with the latest schemes of lighting and heating and equipped with many hundreds of pounds worth of new plant, is now at the service of the industry. The Architect was Mr. F. E. Jones, who designed the new Madame Tussaud's, and the Builder Mr. R. H. Radburn, of Acton.

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claimed that this is the first time that this has ever been done in any cinema theatre. One will serve the corridors, tea lounge and waiting rooms, whilst the other will serve the auditorium, it being considered that in a theatre of this size it is essential to have separate heating control for the theatre proper.

Charmingly appointed refreshment lounge and tea rooms have also been provided for which electric kitcheners will be utilised.

The projection room and its attendant rooms are probably without equal in the U.K., both for size and up-to-date equipment. Amongst other apparatus installed are one Super Simplex Model "M," three Simplex machines with Western Electric sound bases mechanisms, two Brenkard Super Spots and a Brenograph Effects Projector. The Simplex machines being fitted with Hall & Connolly high-intensity arcs.

As with its sister house at Brixton, the Finsbury Park Astoria boasts a complete self-contained flat upon the roof where will live the staff manager of the theatre. He will be in direct telephone communication with every part of the house night and day.

The Contractors

Griggs & Son, Ltd., Victoria Street, S.W., were the general contractors. Sub-contractors included:—Ed. Wood & Co., Ltd., Manchester, constructional steelwork; Light Stellwork (1925), Ltd., Willesden, N.W., light steelwork; The Self Sentencing Expanded Metal Co., Ltd., Cannon Street, E.C., suspended ceilings; Shaws Glazed Brick Co., Ltd., Darwen, Lancs., glazed terra cotta; British Reinforced Concrete Engineering Co., Ltd., Smith Square, S.W., steel reinforcement; Hollow Steel Flooring Co., Ltd., Middlesbrough, flooring; Trussed Concrete Steel Co., Ltd., Kensington, S.W., reinforced concrete floors; Malcolm McLeod & Co., Ltd., Walthamstow, precast stairs and balcony; Haywards, Ltd., Borough, S.E.1, metal windows; Williams & Williams, Kingsway, W.C., metal windows; Morris Singer Co., Ltd., Rochester Row, S.W., metal windows; Richardson Building Supplies, Gray's Inn, W.C., asbestos roof tiling; Carrier Engineering Co., Ltd., Buckingham

CONTRACT DIARY

Aberdeen: The architects for reconstruction of Poole's Palace Theatre are Marshall & Tweedy, of 129, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Boscombe: Jenkins & Sons, Ltd., Bournemouth, have the contract for rebuilding the Savoy. Cecil Masey, F.R.I.B.A., is the architect.

Burnley: The Corporation has approved plans for alterations at the Alhambra Picture Theatre for Alhambra (Burnley), Ltd.

Leamington: G. E. & W. Wincott, Nuneaton, are the contractors for the 1,600-seater in Dormer Place, planned by Horace G. Bradley, of Birmingham.

London, West End: Pitcher Construction Co., Ltd., are contractors for modernisation of the Windmill Theatre (formerly the Palais de Luxe), Great Windmill Street, W.1, to plans of F. Edward Jones.

Plymouth: The Watch Committee has approved plans by Bertie Crewe, of London, W., for extensive additions at the Electric Theatre, Fore Street.

Plymouth: The Corporation has passed plans submitted by the Central Development Syndicate, Ltd., for erection of a cinema and cafe in Lockyer Street and Princess Square.

Gate, S.W., heating and ventilation; Berkeley Electrical Engineering Co., 147, Queen Victoria Street, E.C., electrical installation; Franco-British Electrical Co., Ltd., Oxford Street, W., electrical signs; J. Frank Brockliss, Great Marlborough Street, W., projection installation and screens; Sturtevant Engineering Co., Ltd., Queen Victoria Street, E.C., vacuum cleaning installation; Mather & Platt, Great Smith Street, S.W., sprinklers and fire hydrants; Messrs. Gimson & Co. (Leicester), Ltd., Surrey Street, W.C., counter weighting; F. Burkitt, Borough, S.E., fire curtain; H. E. Gaze, Euston Buildings, N.W., fibrous and solid plaster to auditorium; F. J. Green, Wicklow Street, W.C., fibrous and solid plaster to tea room; May Construction Co., Ltd., South Wimbledon, S.W., acoustic plaster-work; Marc Henri & Laverdet, Southampton Street,

W., interior decoration and proscenium curtain; Brookes, Ltd., Victoria Street, S.W., marble paving and fountain; Marble Decorations, Ltd., Kingsland Road, E., marble paving; Cope & Co., Bury Street, W.C., wall tiling; C. W. A. Banks, Brockley Road, S.E., floor tiling; Ed. Evans & Son, Milcote Street, S.E., terralith and terrazzo flooring; J. Starkie Gardner, Ltd., Southfields, S.W., canopy and flag poles, iron railings and metal work; British Challenge Glazing Co., Marshgate Lane, E., lantern lights; H. & C. Davis, Clapham, S.W., metal work; Hitchins Laminated Wood Products, Ltd., Kingsway, W.C., veneered doors; Hammond Bros. & Champness, Alfreton Street, E., service lifts; Jackson Boliers, Ltd., Tothill Street, S.W., kitchen equipment; L. Lumley & Co., Ltd., Minorities, E., soda fountain; A. Goldstein & Co., Westminster Bridge Road, S.W., glass for tea lounge, etc.; W. W. Turner & Co., Ltd., Birmingham, carpets and chairs; S. Lessers & Sons, Ltd., Houndsditch, E., furniture; North British Rubber Co., Ltd., Tottenham Court Road, W., rubber flooring; John Compton Organ Co., Park Royal, N.W., organ.

LEWISHAM PLANS WITH L.C.C.

Plans for the super which Julius Rayman is to build at Lewisham are being considered by the London County Council. They have already been approved by Lewisham Borough Council.

The theatre is to have a seating capacity of 3,000, with further room for 1,500 standing patrons, and has been designed by J. Stanley Beard & Clare, F/A.R.I.B.A., of Baker Street, W. Reports on the scheme have appeared in THE BIOSCOPE earlier in the year.

EQUIPMENT CONTRACTS

Amongst the contracts now being executed or just completed by the Walturdaw Cinema Supply Co., Manchester, are: Picture House, Buxton (Ernemann No. 2 machines); King's, Oldham (Ernemann No. 2); Princess, Stalybridge (Ernemann No. 2); Park Cinema, Alexandra Park, Manchester (Hahn Goerz "Hahn II" machines). The first three theatres are being equipped with B.T.H. and the Park Cinema with Harley talking picture mechanisms.