

Auditorium and stage of the new Riviera theatre, Omaha, Nebr., which was opened last month by A. H. Blank. The Riviera is an atmospheric type theatre, designed by John Eberson. Details of its construction and equipment are given in story on this page.

Blank Opens New Atmospheric Theatre in Omaha

THE first atmospheric theatre in several states surrounding it, the new Riviera theatre opened March 26 by A. H. Blank is something new in theatre construction in the Omaha territory. The cost of the house has not been announced, but the investment is reported to be close to \$2,500,000.

The theatre was designed by John Eberson, who was on hand for a final inspection before the opening on March 26. Mr. Eberson drew heavily on the architecture of the Mediterranean countries. There are traces of Spanish and Moorish effects, particularly on the outside of the building, while the interior is Italian in its nature. The Selden-Breck Construction Company had the general contract.

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Blue skies overhead, not only in the main auditorium but also in the entrance, greet the theatregoers. In the skies are fixed stars, twinkling stars, and, hovering around the edges, graceful doves.

The side walls of the auditorium are of the now well-known atmospheric kind—ornamental balconies, doorways and statuary—in fact, an ideal group of artistic architecture and construction chosen from the best examples of palaces and villas.

The outside construction is of buff and brown colored brick, in artistic pattern. The outside dimensions are 132 by 165 feet. The theatre is located at the corner of Farnam and 20th streets, Farnam being the main street of Omaha. Setting the theatre back from the curbing of 20th street will be the start of widening this cross street and will give the motion picture house an imposing position on two wide streets.

* * *

The 20th street side is a blank wall, while the Farnam street side "steps back" above the first story. Five small store rooms occupy the first floor on this side.

The entrance is on the corner. The box office has its windows out toward the street, under marquees extending out to the edge of the sidewalk on both sides. The corner is surmounted by a Spanish-Moorish round tower in bright colors.

The box office and entrance being on the corner permits the management to handle

incoming and outgoing crowds so that they will not interfere with each other. The incoming crowd goes from the outer entrance room through the doors into a spacious foyer, with plenty of room and comfort. The outgoing crowd can be shunted to the side along the wide corridor back of the seats.

The house contains 3,500 seats. These seats are all upholstered, both downstairs and in the balcony. The seats are "staggered" so that the vision of one occupant is not obstructed by the person ahead. The aisles are particularly wide, permitting six persons to walk abreast. There is a light for each row of seats so that patrons will not stumble. The main auditorium floor is 110 by 96 feet. There are no pillars

obstructing the view, the balcony being suspended by a double set of steel girders. An actual weight test of 400 pounds to the square foot was made to test the safety of the balcony.

The balcony is 110 feet wide and 70 feet deep and so constructed that the view of the stage and the screen is just as good as on the ground floor.

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The theatre was set on 353 concrete piles, each 57 feet long and encased in steel tubing. They were driven into the ground by a 4,000-pound pile driver. This construction is necessary in Nebraska because there is no rock understructure, the soil and clay extending down indefinitely.

The total amount of steel used was 1,500,-

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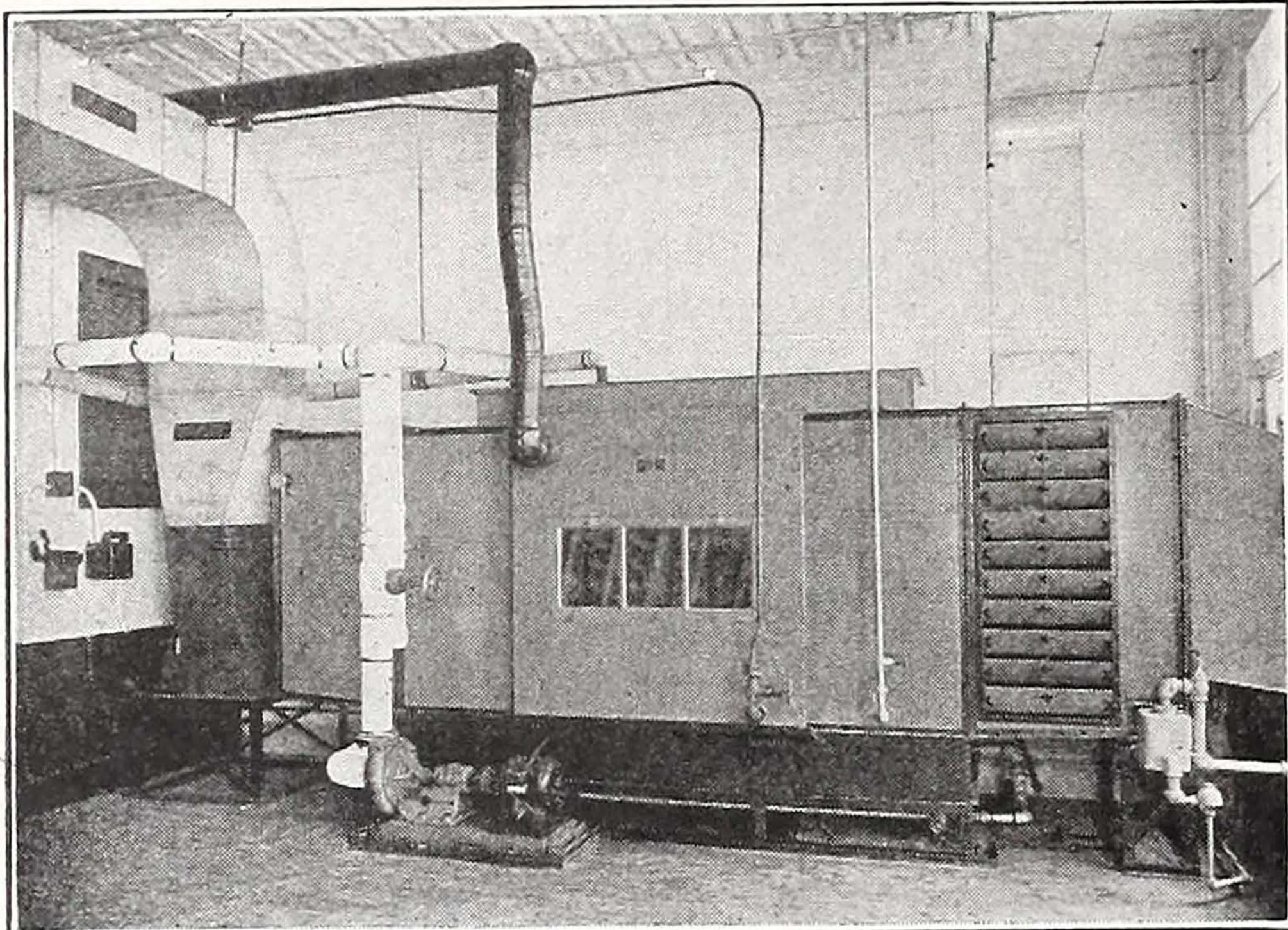
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000 pounds. The walls are doubly sound proofed to keep out all noise from street cars and traffic on two sides of the building. Accoustics also was given much thought. Walls of porous material and draperies help to absorb sound. "Sound chambers" were sunk into the caissons of the building, where "floating girders" serve as tuning forks to carry off extraneous sounds.

Soft lights mark the interior, just as bright lights mark the exterior. The theatre requires about 50,000 light bulbs. A huge sign hung on the corner and therefore visible from two sides proclaims the "Riviera." The letters are five feet high. The sign is 12 feet wide and 59 feet high.

In addition to comfortable rest rooms and lounging rooms there is a children's nursery, which is particularly attractive. An aquarium, sand boxes and other amusements are provided. The theatre also contains a model projection room, where previews can be held.

* * *

The air of the theatre is changed every few minutes by a Reynolds air conditioning, heating and ventilating system, which washes, dries, sterilizes and warms or cools, as the case may be, the air of the house. The house has an automatic sprinkler system with 250 sprinklers.

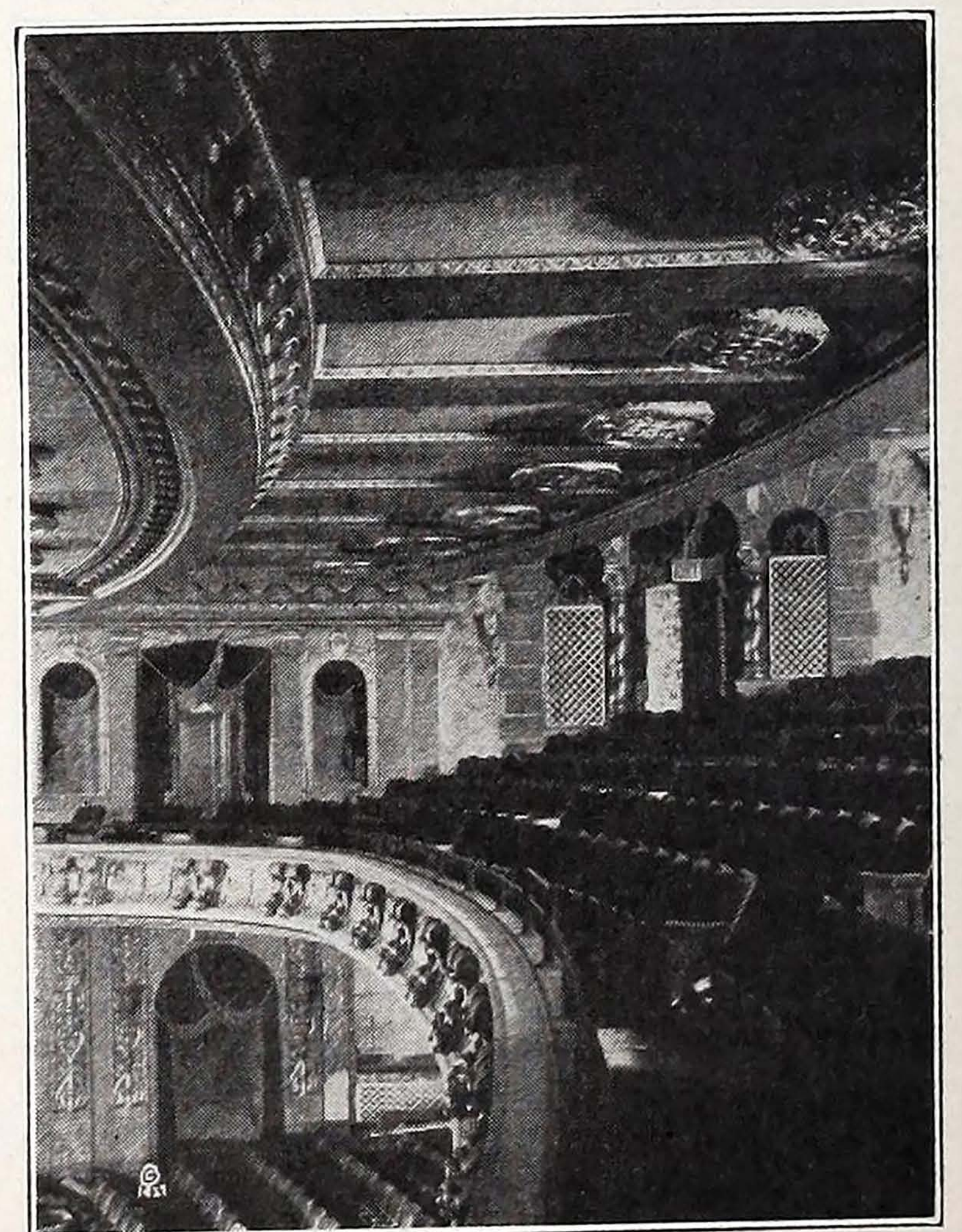
A hydraulic lifting orchestra pit is a feature of the house. The entire orchestra is lifted from the bottom of the pit to a level of the stage for their main overture. The reaction on the audience is always effective.

The stage is 30 feet from the curtain to the back walls, and the curtain is 50 feet across. There are ample facilities for large stage productions. The organ is a Wuritzer five manual instrument with all latest attachments.

The Riviera theatre is in a class of its own within 1,000 miles east and west and 600 miles north and south. One must go to Chicago on the east, Denver on the west, Kansas City on the south and Minneapolis on the north to find any house that can compare with it.

IOWA

CEDAR RAPIDS, IA.—Theatre and stores. Owner: Security Realty Co., C. Bard, Indianapolis, and G. Monroe, 804 N. 33rd Street. Omaha, Neb. Architect: G. L. Fischer, 1437 City National Bank Building, Omaha.



A view of the balcony of the Roxy theatre showing a portion of the 6,214 seats in the world's largest theatre.

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