

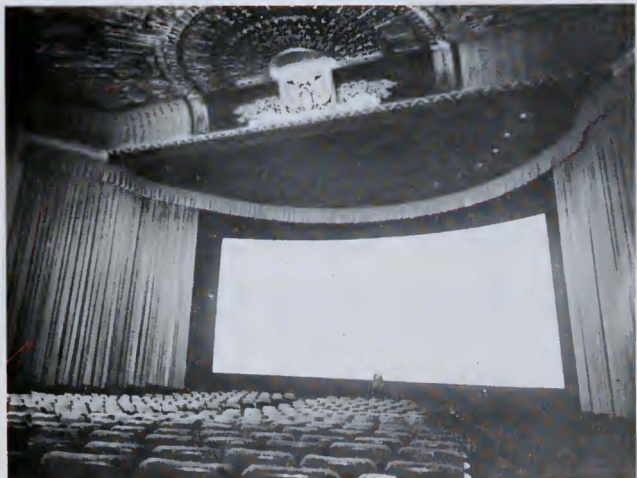
*Construction • Equipment • Concessions • Maintenance*

# THE

# MODERN

JANUARY 13, 1969

# THEATRE



*Completely remodeled in six weeks, United Artists' Egyptian Theatre features the first Dimension 150 installation in Hollywood; has gold curtains, royal blue, maroon seats.*

featuring

Theatre Construction and Renovation

# A \$250,000 Renovation in Six Weeks for UA's Egyptian Meets Film Deadline

**C**ALLED ONE of the fastest and most comprehensive remodeling and refurbishing jobs on record, a \$250,000 renovation of United Artists' 46-year-old Egyptian Theatre, in Hollywood, was completed in six weeks—two days ahead of schedule. The project included installation of a D-150 all-purpose projection system, an Ampex solid state eight-channel sound system, widening and moving back the screen, lowering the projection room to seat level, widening the proscenium arch opening to 80 feet from 40 feet, completely redecorating the auditorium, adding new soundproofing, replacing carpeting and updating restrooms.

Working on an around-the-clock schedule, a crew of 50 men rushed completion of the project in order to meet the deadline for the Egyptian's reopening with the premiere of "Funny Girl." The theatre was shuttered for six weeks. And the renovation, it was said, would normally have amounted to a three-to-four-month job.

## New Screen, Main Floor Booth

Major changes involved moving the projection booth down to the main floor and situating a new 75-foot-wide deeply curved D-150 screen 30 feet further back than the original screen, so as to accommodate the Dimension 150 projection system. By lowering the projection room to floor level, the projection angle was made "nearly ideal"



Huge 75-foot single sheet Dimension 150 screen is laced into place two days ahead of schedule as one of last steps in updating Hollywood's landmark UA Egyptian Theatre.

New projection booth included in remodeling of Egyptian was installed at auditorium floor level. Booth has special carpeting, Norelco 70/35mm projectors, Ashcraft lamps, D-150 Ampex 8-channel sound system.

for the screen. The longer projection throw from the rear of the seating area also allows use of a focal length projection lens with less correction than the previous shorter one, it is stated.

Despite the area taken over by the new projection booth, the Egyptian actually was able to add 22 seats to its capacity. By utilizing the extra space provided by moving the screen back and by filling in the orchestra pit, the theatre increased its seating from 1,318 to 1,340.

R. L. Grosh & Sons Scenic Studios installed the hardware—manufactured by its subsidiary Tru-Roll Corp.—for the D-150 screen's remotely controlled movable masking that enables it to provide all picture sizes and aspect ratios. Draperies are also by Grosh.

The new Ampex solid state 8-channel sound system—developed specifically for the Dimension 150 process—was installed for the first time in a Hollywood theatre. It replaces the six-channel magnetic sound system which Ampex developed and installed first at the Egyptian, in 1955, and for which Ampex later received an Academy award. The new system is said to occupy about half the space of previous systems. Other equipment in the specially carpeted booth includes Norelco 70/35mm projectors and Ashcraft lamps.

## Five Speaker Systems Behind Stage

In the D-150 process, five Voice of the Theatre speaker systems are located behind the stage, and three banks of effects speakers surround the audience. The Ampex eight-channel sound system uses three separate channels to drive the surround speakers.

The motorized masking system is controlled by pushbutton selection at each projection operating station. Separate adjustments for top masking and side masking provide an unlimited variety of picture widths and heights. Duplicate control panels are provided to operate the screen mask-

ing and curtain from a backstage location should the need arise.

Originally opened in 1922 by Sid Grauman and known as Grauman's Egyptian Theatre, the house was conceived as encompassing both a legitimate stage and a motion picture theatre. Long a landmark on Hollywood Boulevard, it has been the site of many famous film premieres, and many of the biggest stars have appeared on its stage. Site of the first Todd-AO system installation in 1955, it was extensively remodeled then for the opening of "Oklahoma!"—the first 70mm Todd-AO feature. It was also redecorated and refurbished when "My Fair Lady" opened its Hollywood engagement. "Robinhood" was shown at the original opening in October, 1922. At the gala reopening October 9, 1968, following the current renovation, seats in the deluxe roadshow theatre for the premiere of "Funny Girl" sold for \$100 apiece.

## Entire Proscenium Removed

One of the major tasks confronting the construction engineers in the Egyptian's six-week "face-lifting" was removal of about 150 tons of concrete—representing the entire proscenium. As jackhammers tore loose boulder size chunks of concrete non-stop, other workmen rushed construction of a new concrete beam to support the new proscenium.

An example of the kind of time- and labor-saving concepts employed was a novel method of completing two jobs at the same time. While workmen were busily engaged atop a three-story scaffold temporarily supporting the roof, other crews were pouring a new concrete floor around the scaffold legs. After the pouring had been completed and the scaffold was ready to be moved, acetylene torches quickly cut off the legs just above the new floor and work continued without a moment's loss.

Johnson-Seurlock Co. was the general contractor. Bob Crosby was the job supervisor.

