

Brooklyn Paramount Theatre, Movie Citadel, Opens Tomorrow

Playhouse Dedicated to Sound Films Boasts Magnificent Appointments—Boro President Byrne to Speak.

To usher the theatre goers of Brooklyn, from the tawdry hubbub of everyday, modernity, into the towering, tranquil magnificence of an early Italian Renaissance interior whose mellow, amber warmth is freshened by the cool blue of sky and outdoors—such is the plan of construction underlying the new Brooklyn Paramount Theatre, Paramount Sq., Flatbush and DeKalb aves. which opens its doors to the public tomorrow noon.

Well aware of the lasting effectiveness and charm of a sudden surprise, the builders of the new theatre have purposely selected a business-like, yellow brick office building to house this exquisite jewel of the theatre-maker's craft—"the ultimate in theatre beauty and luxury." Outside, the pounding tumult of subways and elevated, clang of surface cars, a hurrying and a bustling, squawking of taxicabs—the tinny din and clatter of a mechanized 20th century metropolis. Within, the stately peace of cathedrals, the serene, sober splendor of antiquity brooding, in the hush of vaulted arches, pillars and graceful frescoes, among the relics of a past and colorful age.

Series of Stairways

As one walks between the marble colonnade of the main lobby, one becomes instantly conscious of being in a theatre which is fundamentally separate and apart from anything that has ever been done before in the art of playhouses. The colonnade leads to an elaborate series of stairways which wind away to the various parts of the building. The merest suggestion of a tunnel effect has been studiously avoided. Practically the entire building is visible from the lobby. One has an airy vista of gracefully arched stairways, marble statues, fountains, grilled gardens and colorful art treasures to warm the eye wherever one looks.

While the patrons are strolling about the lobby examining the art objects, permanently incorporated in the building and placed about the marble halls, a carefully selected lobby pianist will furnish a sympathetic obligato to their thoughts and fancies. This difficult position—difficult because she must satisfy, from memory, the musical yearnings of every patron, from the titanic profusions of the old masters to the latest squawk out of Tin Pan Alley—is filled by Miss Ruth Bingaman, noted concert pianist and composer. Before selecting Miss Bingaman for the position, Boris Morros, general music director for Publix Theatres, put her through a two hours grilling during which he shot the names of 167 different compositions at her, ranging from Chopin's Waltz in A Minor to "Yes, We Have No Bananas!" all of which she played by heart.

A Charming Interior

The warm, amber glow of a hearthside radiates from the interior of the theatre suffusing a quaintly carved chair here, a bronze torchiere there, or an ebony table upon which a laughing figure in white marble reflects the sunlight of its native Mediterranean shores. A charming interior! And yet, over it all a lucent blue sky seeps through the embroidered lattice work ceiling and lends the fresh breath of outdoors to the comfortable security of an interior.

Never before in the history of theatre building has this combination been effected. "Atmospheric" theatres or theatres which give one the impression of being out-of-doors, are not a novelty. But the ingenious idea of combining the intimacy of an interior with the exhilarating freshness of an exterior is embodied in the Brooklyn Paramount alone.

Like most original and effective ideas, the principle underneath it is a simple one. A lattice work of solid steel, encased in fancifully decorated carving, is suspended some 10 feet from the ceiling by means of steel supports. The ceiling itself is decorated in sky blue and the intervening space between it and the grill is illuminated. Viewed from below, one has the impression of being in a lofty arbor through which the sky seems to stretch up into infinity.

Movable Murals

This outdoor effect is further emphasized by the sides of the theatre. Here, too, a secondary wall in the form of decorative panels, lifts its graceful sculptures to the lattice work overhead. The space between the two walls is illuminated by a special process to give the impression of an exterior.

One of the most outstanding of the many innovations in the new theatre is the system of movable murals. This is obtained by the Clavilux or color organ, invented by Thomas Wilfred, which is manipulated like an organ, but which, instead of playing music, paints pictures with light. Four of these color organs, or rather a finer and later development called the Luminar, are installed on top of the arches at the side of the auditorium. These flash three dimensioned paintings in glowing colors upon the smooth, white plaster walls, and the pictures are always moving. As in music, the artist, having composed these symphonies in light, notes the positions

of the keys on paper and this "music" can be recorded like piano player records and later reproduced. It is the first time that this invention has been used in connection with a decorative scheme of any theatre building in the world.

New Type of Lens

Another novelty in the illumination of the theatre is a new species of lens used on all lighting apparatus throughout the building. Imbedded in the lens is a fine network of minute prisms which diffuse the light and dissipate the filmy shadow in the center of every ray of light emanating from an ordinary lens. The new lens affords a soft, mellow light, free from any hard glitter or garishness.

An illuminated semi-circle of carved glass, toned down to harmonize with the subdued, burnt-orange color scheme of the interior, indicates the mezzanine box front. It is constructed of a special type of carved glass with design known as "La Lique" glass. When illuminated from behind, the design and carving is strikingly effective.

The supporting columns for mezzanine and balcony are made of bronze grill, backed up with glass, and are illuminated from within. They create the impression of pillars of light standing out in the darkness.

The lounges, foyers, music rooms, smoking rooms, cosmetic rooms and other gathering places about the theatre combine the treasures of antiquity in furniture, draperies, statues and paintings with the latest development of modern science in

lighting, garden effects and artistic theatre decoration. Everywhere the comfort of the patron has been the primary consideration—that, and the lulling of the senses by weaving an enchanting atmosphere of beauty.

The Brooklyn Paramount Theatre is the first theatre in the world to be built expressly for sound pictures. In addition to all the known scientific methods for obtaining perfection of acoustics, the builders sunk nearly two score "sound chambers" deep down into the caissons of the building, where "floating girders" act as tuning forks to carry off extraneous sounds. The walls are made of porous cement to absorb sound, surfaces covered with soft drapes, or broken up by giant art coverings and figures are also splendid helps in preventing reverberation and "throw-back" of voices and musical tones.

Being the last large organ built by Wurlitzers, the Brooklyn-Paramount organ includes the latest innovations and developments of the organ making craft, having the double advantage of incorporating all the improvements of past efforts and eliminating the deficiencies and mistakes. It is one of the largest organs in the world and can be made to crash into the pulsing crescendo of a 200-piece symphony orchestra. One of the outstanding innovations in this organ is the unusual shape of the organ chambers which are made like the sounding boards on the pulpits of famous European cathedrals.

Murtagh Is Soloist

Henry Murtagh, formerly soloist at the Capitol and Rivoli theatres in New York, and rated as one of the best theatre organists in the world, has been selected as the organ soloist for the new theatre.

The large "flying stage," the last word in stage decoration and equipment, will be commanded by Paul Ash, genial giant of jazz, and a hand-picked band of stars from the leading jazz bands of the country. These men were picked, not only for their abilities as musicians, but also for their appearance, stage presence, mental attitude and personality. It is the most uniquely chosen orchestra in the world, each man being "chart-analyzed" before being accepted, and if he didn't strike a general average of perfection, he was dropped from the list.

A fairland of light, a wonderland of color, a garden of talented and beautiful girls, all expert entertainers, musical surprises and a blend of the best in popular and classical entertainment—"a stage show that is more than that"—this is the type of public stage show which will appear at the Brooklyn Paramount. The noted producers on the public staff include Frank Cambria, John Murray Anderson, Boris Petroff, Charles Niggemeyer and many others. The Brooklyn theatre will have the same shows that play in the New York Paramount, the Metropolitan in Boston, the Tivoli and Uptown in Chicago and other Publix Theatres. The opening show at the Brooklyn Paramount will be the John Murray Anderson production, "Stars."

"Manhattan Cocktail."

Jesse L. Lasky, first vice-president in charge of production for Paramount-Famous Lasky Corporation, has promised to give Brooklyn the finest pictures produced. All the production companies, Paramount, First National, Metro-Goldwyn, Warner Brothers, Universal, Educational, United Artists and F. B. O. have all signed contracts with the Brooklyn Paramount Theatre whereby first choice for pictures in Brooklyn goes to the Brooklyn Paramount.

The first picture to open the new theatre will be "Manhattan Cocktail," with Nancy Carroll and Richard Arlen. It will be followed by

"Someone To Love," with Mary Brian and Charles "Buddy" Rogers. "Wedding March" will be the third picture, and it will be followed by "Wings."

As a special opening attraction, Maria "Gamby" Gambarelli, little blonde dancing sweetheart of millions of stage and radio fans, has accepted a \$5,000 single week contract from Publix Theatres to appear with her ballet on the opening date.

Nearly 200 radio stations all over the world will broadcast "salutes to Brooklyn" during the week starting Nov. 18th. Brooklyn radio fans who comprise the five largest lists of stations "received" during that week, will receive an annual complimentary ticket for the Brooklyn Paramount Theatre.

Byrne to Speak

J. L. McCurdy is the managing director of the Brooklyn Paramount Theatre. Although he is only 36 years of age, he can boast of nearly 22 years of theatrical experience. Manager McCurdy has operated the biggest de luxe theatres in Indianapolis, Chicago, New York, Kansas City, Boston, Detroit, St. Louis and many other cities.

Publix Theatres Corporation, which owns the new theatre, has announced that the general public is dearer to its heart than the purple plush and glitter of what used to pass for cinema-cathedral pish-tush. The theatre will be served by as efficient and expert a staff that the entire organization can muster, but the ramrod spinal columns of the ushers will select a little, their objective being to make their guests feel at home rather than at a parade.

A spirit of democracy will prevail in the new theatre from the first day it opens. The gala inaugural program will glorify the public. The opening, according to Manager McCurdy, will be on the policy that one person's money is as good as another's.

It is true that there will be possibly several hundred internationally celebrated persons who will come by invitation. But there will be no speeches except one brief talk by Borough President Byrne, who will present the theatre to the public, in person, at the first performance in the evening and in movietone at all subsequent shows.

"So, except for invitations to newspaper folk, public officials and theatrical folk, the opening day of the

Brooklyn Paramount Theatre will be like any other day thereafter. The 500 mezzanine seats will be reserved all day for the invited guests, but these will not be asked to come up on the stage to take a bow or make a speech."