

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
November 17, 1987; Designation List 196  
LP-1336

GOLDEN THEATER (originally Theater Masque), first floor interior consisting of the auditorium, the stage, the staircases leading from the first floor to the balcony floor; the balcony floor interior consisting of the balcony, the upper part of the auditorium and ceiling; and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall and ceiling surfaces, doors, stair railings and attached decorative elements; 252-256 West 45th Street, Manhattan. Built 1926-27; architect Herbert J. Krapp.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1016, Lot 58.

On June 14 and 15, 1982, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as an Interior Landmark of the Golden Theater, first floor interior consisting of the lobby, the auditorium, the stage, the staircases leading from the first floor to the balcony floor and all connecting entrance areas; the balcony floor interior consisting of the balcony, the upper part of the auditorium and ceiling, the upper part of the stage house; and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall, ceiling and floor surfaces, doors, stair railings and attached decorative elements; and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 32). The hearing was continued to October 19, 1982. Both hearings had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Eighty-one witnesses spoke or had statements read into the record in favor of designation. Two witnesses spoke in opposition to designation. The owner was among those speaking in opposition to designation. The Commission has received many letters and other expressions of support in favor of this designation.

#### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The interior of the Golden Theater survives today as one of the historic theater interiors that symbolize American theater for both New York and the nation. Built as the Theatre Masque in 1926-27, the Golden was among the half-dozen theaters constructed by the Chanin Organization in the mid-1920s, to the designs of Herbert J. Krapp, that typified the development of the Times Square/Broadway theater area.

Founded by Irwin S. Chanin, the Chanin organization was a major construction company in New York. During the 1920s, Chanin branched out into the building of theaters, and helped create much of the ambience of the heart of the theater district. Chanin built the Theatre Masque as part of a complex on Shubert Alley including three theaters--the Theatre Masque, Royale and Majestic--and a hotel, the Lincoln (now the Milford Plaza). It was renamed the Golden in the 1930s, when producer John Golden took control of it.

Herbert J. Krapp, who designed all the Chanins' theaters, was the most prolific architect of the Broadway theater district. Having worked in the offices of Herts & Tallant, premier theater designers of the pre-war period, Krapp went on to design theaters for the two major builders of the post-war era, the Shubert and Chanin organizations.

The Golden represents a typical and important aspect of the nation's theatrical history. Beyond its historical importance, its interior is a handsome design, one of a group of Chanin theaters which depart from the traditional neo-Classical style with Adamesque ornament for a more romantic, eclectic style which Chanin and Krapp called "Spanish modern."

For half a century the Golden Theater Interior has served as home to countless numbers of the plays through which the Broadway theater has come to personify American theater. As such, it continues to help define the Broadway theater district, the largest and most famous concentration of legitimate stage theaters in the world.

### The development of the Broadway Theater District

The area of midtown Manhattan known today as the Broadway theater district encompasses the largest concentration of legitimate playhouses in the world. The theaters located there, some dating from the turn of the century, are significant for their contributions to the history of the New York stage, for their influence upon American theater as a whole, and in many cases for their architectural design.

The development of the area around Times Square as New York's theater district at the end of the 19th century occurred as a result of two related factors: the northward movement of the population of Manhattan Island (abetted by the growth of several forms of mass transportation), and the expansion of New York's role in American theater. The northward movement of Manhattan's residential, commercial, and entertainment districts had been occurring at a steady rate throughout the 19th century. In the early 1800s, businesses, stores, hotels, and places of amusement had clustered together in the vicinity of lower Broadway. As New York's various businesses moved north, they began to isolate themselves in more or less separate areas: the financial institutions remained downtown; the major retail stores situated themselves on Broadway between 14th and 23rd Streets, eventually moving to Herald Square and Fifth Avenue after the turn of the century; the hotels, originally located near the stores and theaters, began to congregate around major transportation centers such as Grand Central Terminal or on the newly fashionable Fifth Avenue; while the mansions of the wealthy spread farther north on Fifth Avenue, as did such objects of their beneficence as the Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>1</sup>

The theater district, which had existed in the midst of stores, hotels, and other businesses along lower Broadway for most of the 19th century, spread northward in stages, stopping for a time at Union Square, then Madison Square, then Herald Square. By the last two decades of the 19th century, far-sighted theater managers had begun to extend the theater district even farther north along Broadway, until they had reached the area that was then known as Long Acre Square and is today called Times Square.

A district of farmlands and rural summer homes in the early 1800s, Long Acre Square had by the turn of the century evolved into a hub of mass transportation. A horsecar line had run across 42nd Street as early as the 1860s, and in 1871, with the opening of Grand Central Depot and the completion of the Third and Sixth Avenue Elevated Railways, it was comparatively simple for both New Yorkers and out-of-towners to reach Long Acre Square. Transportation continued to play a large part in the development of the area; in 1904 New York's subway system was inaugurated, with a major station located at 42nd Street and Broadway. The area was then renamed Times Square in honor of the newly erected Times Building.<sup>2</sup> The evolution of the Times Square area as a center of Manhattan's various mass transit systems made it a natural choice for the location of legitimate playhouses, which needed to be easily accessible to their audiences.

The theater business that invaded Long Acre Square at the end of the 19th century consisted of far more than a few playhouses, for at that time New York was the starting-point for a vast, nationwide entertainment network known as "the road." This complex theater operation had its beginnings in the 1860s when the traditional method of running a theater, the stock system, was challenged by the growing popularity of touring "combination" shows. In contrast to the stock system, in which a theater manager engaged a company of actors for a season and presented them in a variety of plays, the combination system consisted of a company of actors appearing in a single show which toured from city to city, providing its own scenery, costumes, and sometimes musical accompaniment. Helped by the expansion of the nation's railroads after the Civil War,<sup>3</sup> the combination system soon killed off the majority of stock companies.<sup>3</sup> By 1904 there were some 420 combination companies touring through thousands of theaters in cities and towns across the country.<sup>4</sup>

Of crucial importance to the operation of the combination system was a single location where combination shows could be cast, rehearsed, tried out, and then booked for a cross-country tour. Since New York was already regarded as the most important theater city in America, it is not surprising that it became the headquarters for the combination system. In addition to the many theaters needed for an initial Broadway production for the combinations before they went on tour, New York's theater district encompassed rehearsal halls, the headquarters of scenery, costume, lighting, and makeup companies, offices of theatrical agents and producers, theatrical printers and newspapers, and other auxiliary enterprises. Close to the theater district were boarding houses catering to the hundreds of performers who came to New York in the hope of being hired for a touring show or a Broadway production.

As theaters were built farther uptown, the auxiliary enterprises also began to move north. By the turn of the century,

the section of Broadway between 37th Street and 42nd Street was known as the Rialto. Theater people gathered or promenaded there. Producers could sometimes cast a play by looking over the actors loitering on the Rialto; and out-of-town managers, gazing out of office windows, could book tours by seeing who was available.<sup>5</sup>

The theater district that began to move north to Long Acre Square in the 1890s was thus a vast array of business enterprises devoted to every facet of theatrical production.

The movement of the theater district north along Broadway had proceeded at a steady pace during the latter part of the 19th century. The Casino Theater was opened on the southeast corner of Broadway and 39th Street in 1882. A year later, it was joined by a most ambitious undertaking--the construction of the Metropolitan Opera House on Broadway between 39th and 40th Streets. In 1888, the Broadway Theater was erected on the southwest corner of Broadway and 41st Street. Five years later, the American Theater opened its doors at Eighth Avenue between 41st and 42nd Streets, as did Abbey's Theater at Broadway and 38th Street and the Empire Theater at Broadway and Fortieth Street.

It remained for Oscar Hammerstein I to make the move into Long Acre Square itself. At the close of the 19th century, Long Acre Square housed Manhattan's harness and carriage businesses, but was little used at night, when it seems to have become a "thieves' lair."<sup>6</sup> In 1895 Hammerstein erected an enormous theater building on Broadway between 44th and 45th Streets. The original plan for the Olympia called for a "perfect palace of entertainment--which would have included three theaters, a bowling alley, a turkish bath, cafes and restaurants."<sup>7</sup> Only part of this visionary plan ever became a reality. On November 25, 1895, Hammerstein opened the Lyric Theater section of the building, and a little over three weeks later he inaugurated the Music Hall section. Never a financial success, the Olympia closed its doors two years after it opened. Nevertheless, it earned Hammerstein the title of "Father of Times Square."

By the turn of the century Hammerstein had built two more theaters in the Long Acre Square area, and in the years 1901-1920 a total of forty-three additional theaters appeared in midtown Manhattan, most of them in the side streets east and west of Broadway. Much of this theater-building activity was inspired by the competition between two major forces in the industry, the Theatrical Syndicate and the Shubert Brothers, for control of the road. As each side in the rivalry drew its net more tightly around the playhouses it owned or controlled, the other side was forced to build new theaters to house its attractions. The result was a dramatic increase in the number of playhouses, both in New York and across the country. After World War I, as the road declined and New York's theatrical activity increased, the general economic prosperity made possible the construction of thirty additional playhouses in the Times Square area, expanding the boundaries of the theater district so that it stretched from just west of Eighth Avenue to Sixth Avenue, and from 39th Street to Columbus Circle.<sup>8</sup>

The stockmarket crash of 1929 and the resulting Depression caused a shrinkage in theater activity. Some playhouses were torn down, many were converted to motion picture houses, and later to radio and television studios. From the time of the Depression until the 1960s no new Broadway playhouses were constructed. Fortunately, the theaters that survive from the early part of the century represent a cross-section of types and styles, and share among them a good deal of New York's rich theatrical history.

(MMK)

## Evolution of Theater Design

The frenzy of theater construction that occurred in New York during the first thirty years of this century brought with it an evolution in architecture and decoration.<sup>9</sup> At the close of the 19th century American theaters were still being built in the style of traditional European opera houses, with high proscenium arches, narrow auditoriums, two or three balconies built in a horseshoe configuration, and dozens of boxes, some set into the front of the first balcony. Although contemporary notices of the theaters attributed specific (though often vague) styles or periods to them, their interiors were more often than not a melange of styles and colors.

With the increase of theater construction after the turn of the century came a new attitude toward theater architecture and decoration as firms such as Herts and Tallant, Thomas W. Lamb, and others, began to plan the playhouse's exterior and interior as a single, integrated design. The Art Nouveau style New Amsterdam Theater, which opened in 1903, signalled this new seriousness in theater design.

Perhaps influenced by such European experiments as Wagner's Festival Theater at Bayreuth, American theater architects after the turn of the century began to structure their playhouses along different lines. Proscenium openings were made lower and wider, auditoriums were made shallower, seating was planned in a fan shape, and the number of balconies was usually reduced to one. Boxes were cut back to a minimum. The theaters that were built just before and after World War I for the most part shared this new configuration.

Because many of New York's extant playhouses were built during the period in which New York was serving as the starting-point for nationwide tours, they represent a style of theater architecture that is characteristic not only of New York but also of other cities across the United States, for a show which was originally produced in a New York theater would require similar conditions in the theaters in which it toured, and theater owners often hired the same architects to design and build theaters in several cities. Thus, New York's theaters set the standard for theater construction across the United States, as an inspection of designs for theaters in various cities will show.<sup>10</sup>

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## The Broadway Theater in American Theatrical History

The playhouses still standing in the Broadway theater district share among them over eighty years of American theatrical history. In the early years of the century, when American theater was still heavily influenced by Europe, the theaters played host to such great international stars as Sarah Bernhardt, Eleonora Duse, and Mrs. Patrick Campbell, and to adaptations of such European successes as The Merry Widow and Floradora.

It was in the Broadway theaters that the beginnings of a distinctly American drama could be seen in the Western melodramas of David Belasco, the social comedies of Clyde Fitch and Langdon Mitchell, and the problem

plays of Edward Sheldon and Eugene Walter. With the rise of the "little theater" movement in the second decade of the century, it seemed that theatrical leadership had passed from Broadway to such experimental "art" theaters as the Provincetown Playhouse and the Neighborhood Playhouse. Before long, however, the innovations of the little theaters infused Broadway with new life. Beginning with the production of Eugene O'Neill's first full-length play, Beyond the Horizon, on Broadway in 1920, the playhouses of Broadway presented the work of a new generation of playwrights, including, in addition to O'Neill, Maxwell Anderson, Philip Barry, S.N. Behrman, Rachel Crothers, Sidney Howard, George S. Kaufman, George Kelly and Elmer Rice.

The Depression of the 1930s brought with it a new concern with political and social issues, and the dramas presented in the Broadway playhouses reflected that concern. Commercial producers gave us plays by Lillian Hellman, Robert E. Sherwood, and Thornton Wilder, while the Group Theater and other new organizations introduced such writers as Clifford Odets and Sidney Kingsley. The Broadway theaters continued to house challenging plays during the 1940s and 1950s, when new talents such as Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, and William Inge first began writing for the theater.

Meanwhile, musical comedy had blossomed from the adaptations and imitations of European operetta popular at the turn of the century to a uniquely American art form. By the 1940s and 1950s the works of Rodgers and Hammerstein, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, and many others, were being exported from the stages of Broadway to theaters around the world.

The 1960s and 1970s were decades of ferment and change, both in and out of the theater. As in the 1920s, the impetus for theatrical experimentation came from outside of Broadway, and as in the 1920s, the experimentation helped to revitalize the Broadway theater. Today, the playhouses of Broadway are showcases for the best plays of the Off- and Off-Off Broadway theaters, as well as for exciting productions from theatrical workshops, regional theaters, and outstanding foreign companies.

Having moved gradually northward all during the 19th century, New York's theater district finally came to rest at Times Square, where it has remained for almost ninety years. The economic Depression of the 1930s discouraged speculative ventures such as the construction of new theaters, while after prosperity returned in the wake of World War II, the cost of renting land and constructing a theater was prohibitively high. The northward movement of the theater district may also have been discouraged for a number of years by the existence of the Sixth Avenue Elevated Railway, which crossed from Sixth to Ninth Avenues at 53rd Street, thereby providing a natural northern boundary for the theater district.<sup>11</sup>

The Interior of the Golden Theater, as one of the Broadway theaters interiors surviving today in the theater district, contributes to the totality of the district's history by virtue of its participation in that history.

(MMK)

## Notes

1. The discussion of the northward movement of Manhattan's business and theaters is based on Mary Henderson, The City and the Theatre (Clifton, N.J.: James T. White and Co., 1973), pp. 130-131, 168-170.
2. W.G. Rogers and Mildred Weston, Carnival Crossroads: the Story of Times Square (New York: Doubleday, 1960), pp. 39-78; Howard B. Furer, New York: A Chronological and Documentary History 1524-1970 (Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.: Oceana Publications, 1974), p. 34 ff.; The New York Subway (New York: Interborough Rapid Transit Co., 1904; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, n.d.).
3. Alfred L. Bernheim, The Business of the Theatre (New York: Actors Equity Association, 1932; reprint ed., New York: Benjamin Blom, 1964), p. 26.
4. Jack Poggi, Theater in America: The Impact of Economic Forces, 1870-1967 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), p. 6.
5. Brooks Atkinson, Broadway, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1974), p. 11.
6. Philip Paneth, Times Square, Crossroads of the World (New York: Living Books, 1965), p. 20.
7. Henderson, p. 263.
8. Henderson, p. 195-196.
9. The discussion of the developments in American theater architecture is based upon: Ned A. Bowman, "American Theatre Architecture: the Concrete Mirror Held Up to Yankee Nature," The American Theatre: The Sum of its Parts (New York: French, 1972), pp. 199-233; Burr C. Cook, "Twenty Years of Theatre Building," Theatre, 36 (August 1922), 98-99; Arthur S. Meloy, Theatres and Picture Houses (New York: Architects' Supply and Publishing Co., 1916), p. 29.
10. See, for example, the discussion of various theaters in Randolph Williams Sexton and Ben Franklin Betts, eds., American Theaters of Today, 2 vols. (New York: Architectural Book Pubs., 1927, 1930; reprint ed., New York: Vestal, 1977).
11. Stanley Buder, "Forty-Second Street at the Crossroads: A History of Broadway to Eighth Avenue," West 42nd Street: The Bright Light Zone (New York: Graduate School and University Center, CUNY, 1978), p. 62.

## The Chanins

During the middle of the 1920s, the Chanin organization became the second major entrepreneurial builder of Broadway theaters, joining the

Shuberts who had been established in the field for two decades. Unlike the Shuberts, however, the Chanins were builders rather than producers, and their six theaters represent a three-year chapter in a long and distinguished career in the building of New York.

The firm was founded by Irwin Salmon Chanin (b.1892), a native of Bensonhurst, Brooklyn. Soon after his birth the family returned to its native Ukraine, remaining there until 1907 when they moved back to Bensonhurst. Chanin graduated from Cooper Union in 1915 having studied engineering and architecture. His earliest employment was as an engineer working on subway construction in New York and Philadelphia. During World War I he participated in the construction of a poison gas factory for the U.S. Army. In 1919, upon leaving the army, Chanin began his building activities by constructing two houses in Bensonhurst. The success of this modest venture led to the construction of other one- and two-family houses in Bensonhurst as well as the formation of the Chanin Construction Company, in which he was joined by his brother Henry I. Chanin (1893-1973). The firm branched out into apartment buildings in Brooklyn, and erected an office building in downtown Brooklyn. Extending their activities to Manhattan in 1924, they constructed the Fur Center Building.<sup>1</sup> That same year the Chanins expanded into the theater business.

In a 1928 interview with Mary Mullett, Irwin Chanin recalled always having been interested in the theater. As a student at Cooper Union,

that was my one diversion. But I was so poor that all I could afford was an occasional fifty-cent seat in the top gallery. To reach this, I had to go to a separate door. I wasn't allowed to use the main entrance, and this always humiliated me.<sup>2</sup>

In 1924, with the Broadway theater industry booming, Chanin took the opportunity to enter the theater building field. He had no theater organization, but he had a number of friends in the theater and had secured the services of the Shuberts' theater architect, Herbert J. Krapp. Mindful of his early experience, Chanin resolved to develop a new type of plan in which "the girl from the five-and-ten and the richest aristocrat in town enter by the same door."<sup>3</sup> He envisioned an orchestra level with a steep slope towards the rear; the single entrance lobby would be below the slope of the rear orchestra. There would be one large balcony instead of the traditional two smaller ones, thus eliminating the distant second balcony. Krapp told Chanin that the Shuberts wouldn't like such a theater, but Chanin said he did not care what the Shuberts would like. He also insisted on wider seats, more space between rows, and more comfortable dressing rooms.<sup>4</sup>

Chanin's first theater was called Chanin's Forty-Sixth Street Theater (now the Forty-Sixty Street Theater),<sup>5</sup> and in it he and Krapp incorporated Chanin's novel interior arrangement. It was a large theater, especially designed to accommodate musicals. The Forty-Sixth Street was followed by the construction of the Biltmore and the Mansfield (now the Brooks Atkinson) in 1925. In 1926, Chanin undertook a major mixed-use multiple building project which doubled the number of his Broadway theaters and gave final form to what was to become the theater district's traditional heart. On the block bounded by West 45th and West 46th Streets, between Seventh



and Eighth Avenues, the Shuberts had already built the paired Shubert and Booth Theaters behind the Astor Hotel, along the narrow lane which became known as "Shubert Alley" (1911-12), and the similar adjoining pair of the Broadhurst and Plymouth (1916-18). Chanin completed the redevelopment of the block by building the Majestic Theater on West 44th Street, the Theater Masque (today the John Golden) and the adjoining Royale Theater on 45th Street, and the Hotel Lincoln (now the Milford Plaza Hotel) along the Eighth Avenue frontage, all as one interconnecting development. By completing the block's complement of theaters, and by using Herbert J. Krapp, who had already designed the Plymouth and Broadhurst theaters for the Shuberts, Chanin contributed greatly to the cohesiveness of Shubert Alley.

In addition to their six legitimate Broadway playhouses, the Chanins also built three movie palaces, the Loew's Coney Island (1925), the fabulous 6,000-seat Roxy (1927; popularly known as the "Cathedral of the Motion Picture; demolished), and the Beacon Theater, on Broadway between 74th and 75th Streets (1927-28; a designated New York City Interior Landmark). The Beacon, like the Shubert Alley group, was also an unusual mixed-use development, incorporating a movie palace with a hotel.

Chanin's interest in the theater was such that when, in 1927-29, he built the Chanin Building (a designated New York City Landmark), the company's 56-story headquarters located at the corner of Lexington Avenue and East 42nd Street, he included within it a 192-seat theater on the 50th floor (the theater no longer exists). Yet, despite Chanin's interest in theaters, and his construction of some of the city's most notable examples, his company left the theater construction field barely four years after entering it. Chanin's last involvement with the New York theater world was in 1930, when, in exchange for his interest in the Theater Masque and the Royale and Majestic theaters, he acquired from the Shuberts the Century (formerly New) Theater on Central Park West at 62nd Street and replaced it with the twin-towered, Art Deco style Century Apartments.<sup>6</sup>

After leaving the field of Broadway theaters, Chanin's firm moved into the building of luxury apartment houses on Central Park West, including the Century (a designated New York City Landmark) and the Majestic. Extensive suburban building activity, such as Green Acres in Valley Stream, Long Island, occupied much of the firm's time during the 1930s and 1940s. During World War II the firm built 2000 pre-fabricated dwellings in Newport News, Virginia, five hangars at National Airport in Washington, D.C., the Naval Ordnance Laboratory in White Oak, Maryland, and five Navy powder magazine buildings in Indian Head, Maryland. The firm has also built numerous manufacturing buildings in the New York City area and the impressive Coney Island Pumping Station for the City of New York. By 1952, when Irwin S. Chanin was profiled in the National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, the Chanin Organization was composed of approximately 25 firms and corporations engaged in architecture, engineering, and construction, and in the ownership and operation of real estate.<sup>7</sup> Yet despite the relatively brief span of time spent by the firm in the construction of Broadway theaters, its importance to Broadway's development was disproportionately great. In his Broadway theaters, all of which survive to date, Chanin championed a democratic approach to theater design, created theaters considered among the best today for theatrical performances, and

helped complete the development of "Shubert Alley," the heart of the theater district.

(FD, ASD)

#### Notes

1. Landmarks Preservation Commission, Chanin Building Designation Report (LP-0993), November 14, 1978, report prepared by Marjorie Pearson, p. 1. Also, Diana Agrest, ed., A Romance with the City: Irwin S. Chanin (New York: Cooper Union Press, 1982), pp. 16-17.
2. Mary B. Mullett, "The Chanins of Broadway," American Magazine 106 (August 1928), 126.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. For the Chanin theaters see Agrest, pp.13, 22-45; The Chanin Theaters: A Renaissance in Theatre Craft (New York: Chanin Theatres Corporation, n.d.).
6. Interview with Irwin Chanin by Andrew Dolkart, June 26, 1985.
7. "Chanin, Irwin Salmon," National Cyclopedia of American Biography, vol. H, pp. 254-255. For the later projects see also Agrest, pp. 86-94.

#### Herbert J. Krapp

The character of today's Broadway theater district owes more to architect Herbert J. Krapp (1883-1973) than to any other architect. He designed sixteen of the extant Broadway theaters (almost half the total),<sup>1</sup> fourteen of which are in active theatrical use, as well as five theaters that have been demolished.<sup>2</sup> Despite his enormous output, however, little is known today of his life and work.

Herbert Krapp's career coincided with the rise of the Shubert organization as the major force in the New York theater. Upon his graduation from Cooper Union, Krapp joined the office of noted theater architects Henry Herts and Hugh Tallant, who had designed some of the handsomest early twentieth-century theaters in New York, including the Lyceum (1903), New Amsterdam (1902-03), Helen Hayes (1911, demolished), and Longacre (1912-13). According to Krapp's daughter, the partners were becoming increasingly debilitated by morphine addiction, and gradually entrusted Krapp with responsibility for design and office operations.<sup>3</sup> Be that as it may, when the Shuberts next decided to build new theaters, in 1916, they turned to Krapp for designs, and proceeded to commission from him a dozen theaters in Times Square in as many years (1916-1928). Throughout his professional career Krapp remained the preferred Shubert architect. He designed their theaters in New York, Boston, Philadelphia and elsewhere, supervised Shubert theater alterations nationwide, and was even the architect for their private residences.<sup>4</sup>

Besides his twelve Shubert theaters, Krapp designed nine other Times Square houses. Six, built between 1924 and 1927, were for the Chanin Construction Company. Only three, the Alvin, the Hammerstein (now the Ed Sullivan), and the Waldorf (demolished) were designed for independent interests. A brilliant acoustician and gifted architect of great invention, Krapp was responsible for scores of theaters throughout New York City and State (including three movie houses in Queens: the Sunnyside in Woodside and the Jackson and the Boulevard in Jackson Heights) and others stretching from Palm Beach to Detroit. His office records document alterations to literally hundreds of theaters across the country.

Krapp's Broadway theaters closely reflect the interest and needs of a new breed of theatrical entrepreneur, the large-scale speculative owner/builder. Prior to the rise of the Shuberts as major theater owners, most theaters had been erected for independent impresarios, including Oscar Hammerstein who built the first Times Square theater and whose Victory Theater (1899) still stands on 42nd Street, Daniel Frohman who built the Lyceum (1903), Charles Dillingham who built the Lunt-Fontanne (1910), and David Belasco and John Cort who built the theaters that bear their names (1907 and 1912). At the turn of the century, Klaw and Erlanger's Theatrical Syndicate dominated most of the Times Square theaters, but did not sponsor a unified building campaign as the Shuberts eventually did. Since the Shuberts were building theaters largely as financial ventures, most of their buildings tended to be simpler than those designed for the impresarios who were attempting to draw attention both to their theaters and to themselves. The theaters that Krapp designed for the Shuberts are relatively restrained on both the exterior and interior, but they reflect Krapp's mastery of theater layout, as well as the general stylistic trends established by the earlier and more elaborate theater designs in the Times Square theater district.

Krapp's earliest theaters, the Plymouth (1916-17) and Broadhurst (1917), were built as a pair located immediately to the west of Henry Herts's earlier Shubert pair, the Shubert and Booth. The designs of the Plymouth and Broadhurst echo those of the earlier theaters. Like the Shubert and Booth, Krapp's houses have rounded corners that face towards Broadway (the direction from which most audience members arrived). Each corner is accented by an entrance with a broken pedimented enframement and by an oval cartouche. These forms imitate, in a simplified manner, the ornamental forms on Herts's buildings. In addition, Krapp's theaters are faced with bricks separated by wide, deeply inset mortar joints in a manner favored by Herts. The Plymouth and Broadhurst facades are simpler than their neighbors, but they were clearly designed to complement Herts's theaters and create a unified group of Shubert houses.

The Plymouth and Broadhurst are not adorned with a great deal of applied stone or terra cotta. This lack of architectural ornament is typical of Krapp's designs for the Shuberts;<sup>5</sup> the facades of these theaters are generally enlivened by diaper-patterned brick and occasionally by the use of ornamental iron balconies. The use of diaper-patterned brick can be seen on the Plymouth and the Broadhurst, but it is most evident on the Morosco (1917, demolished), Ritz (1921), Ambassador (1921), and the 46th-Street facade of the Imperial (1923). Krapp's use of diaperwork might have been inspired by Herts & Tallant's use of an ornate diaper pattern of terra cotta on their Helen Hayes Theater (1911).

After building a large number of new theaters between 1916 and 1923 the Shuberts undertook very little construction in the Times Square area from 1924 through 1927. During these years the Chanin Construction Company emerged as the major theater builder in the area. The Chanins also turned to Krapp for their theater designs. Major New York City builders, the Chanins considered theaters to be sound financial investments from which they could not fail to profit. The six theaters that Krapp designed for the Chanins are more ornate than those he designed for the Shuberts. One reason may be that the Chanins, new to the theater world, decided that their theaters should project an elegant image; another, that as a building company, they were more concerned than the Shuberts about the exterior appearance of their buildings. Still another factor may have the greater availability of money in the middle of the 1920s as compared to the years during and immediately following World War I when most of the Shubert theaters were erected.

Krapp's first two theaters for the Chanins, the Forty-Sixth Street (1924) and the Biltmore (1925), are neo-Renaissance style structures with extensive terra-cotta detail that includes rusticated bases, monumental Corinthian pilasters, and ornate cornices and balustrades. Krapp's next commission, the Brooks Atkinson (1926), has a facade with the Mediterranean flavor that came to be favored by the Chanins. Referred to at the time as "modern Spanish" in style,<sup>6</sup> the Brooks Atkinson is a brick building articulated by three Palladian openings supported by twisted columns. Roundel panels and a Spanish-tiled sloping roof are additional Spanish forms on the facade. Krapp's largest commission from the Chanins was a trio of theaters, the Golden, Royale, and Majestic, all built between 1926 and 1927 in conjunction with the Lincoln Hotel (now the Milford Plaza Hotel). Like the Brooks Atkinson, these three theaters were described as being "modern Spanish in character."<sup>7</sup> All three were constructed of yellow brick and adorned with areas of decorative terra-cotta pilasters, twisted columns, arches, parapets, and columned loggias.<sup>8</sup>

Following his work for the Chanins, Krapp designed three independent houses, all of which were stylistically unusual. The Waldorf (1926, demolished) which stood on West 50th Street was an ornate French neo-Classical-style structure; the Alvin (1927, now the Neil Simon) an impressive neo-Federal style red brick building; and the Hammerstein (now the Ed Sullivan) a neo-Gothic theater housed in a tall office building. The latter two were commissioned by theatrical impresarios, hence their more elaborate design as compared to Krapp's work for the Shubert and Chanin theater chains.

In 1928 the Shuberts commissioned their final theater from Krapp. The Ethel Barrymore is among Krapp's finest and most unusual designs. The theater is a monumentally scaled structure combining an extremely ornate rusticated Beaux-Arts-style base with a superstructure boldly modeled after the windowed facade of a Roman bath.<sup>9</sup>

Like the exteriors of his buildings, Krapp's interiors are stylistically varied, reflecting the design eclecticism of the first decades of the twentieth century. On many occasions the style of the interior has little to do with that of the exterior. Most of the theater interiors designed for the Shuberts have Adamesque style ornament, a style

deriving from the neo-Classical designs originated by the eighteenth-century English architect Robert Adam. Krapp's Adamesque interiors display the refined, elegant forms common to the style, and such features as delicate garlands, rosettes, and foliate bands. The "Spanish" theaters that Krapp designed for the Chanins have interior details such as twisted columns, arcades, and escutcheons that match the style of the exteriors. All of Krapp's interiors were designed to create a relaxing and comfortable environment for the theatergoer. The decor of the auditoriums is simple yet elegant, and generally complemented by similarly designed lobbies and lounges.

Although Krapp lived to the age of 86, he apparently designed no theaters during the last forty years of his life. Because of the theater glut caused by financial problems during the Depression, theaters ceased being a lucrative architectural specialty. Krapp survived as a building assessor for the City of New York, and turned increasingly to industrial design. A twentieth-century Renaissance man, he supplemented his architectural practice with the patterning of silver- and flatware and especially with his design of mechanical couplings.<sup>10</sup> The theaters he designed in the early decades of this century, however, remain a lasting legacy, and many of his buildings, such as the Majestic, Imperial, Plymouth, and Forty-Sixth Street Theaters, are counted among the most successful and sought-after on Broadway.

(ASD)

#### Notes

1. Krapp's sixteen theaters are the Alvin (now the Neil Simon), Ambassador, Brooks Atkinson, Ethel Barrymore, Biltmore, Broadhurst, Forty-Sixth Street, Golden, Imperial, Majestic, Eugene O'Neil, Plymouth, Ritz, Royale, and Ed Sullivan (originally Hammerstein). The Central (1567 Broadway at 47th Street) is now a movie house and all but its cornice is covered with billboards.
2. The five theaters designed by Krapp that have been demolished are the Bijou (209 West 45th Street), Century (932 Seventh Avenue between 58th and 59th Streets), 49th Street (235 West 49th Street), Morosco (217 West 45th Street), and Waldorf (116 West 50th Street).
3. Interview with Mrs. Peggy Elson, Herbert Krapp's daughter, by Janet Adams, November 16, 1984.
4. Herbert Krapp papers, currently in the possession of Mrs. Peggy Elson, New York City.
5. The 49th Street Theater (1921) was an exception. This building had a terra-cotta facade articulated by fluted pilasters.
6. Brooks Atkinson Theater, Souvenir Program of the dedication (as Mansfield Theater), February 15, 1926, n.p. Billy Rose Theater Collection, Lincoln Center branch, New York Public Library.
7. Royale Theater, Souvenir Program of the dedication, January 11, 1927, n.p. Billy Rose Theater Collection.

8. The use of restricted areas of very ornate detail set against an otherwise unornamented facade is reminiscent of Spanish Baroque or Churrigueresque architecture.
9. This theater is often overlooked because the present rectilinear marquee cuts the facade in half, hiding the ornate base and destroying the subtle juxtaposition between the top and bottom sections of the building.
10. Herbert Krapp papers, and interview with Mrs. Peggy Elson.

### The Theatre Masque

The Theatre Masque is one of three theaters (the other two being the Majestic and Royale) built together with the Lincoln Hotel as a single project by the Chanin Organization.<sup>1</sup> The theaters and hotel occupied the western end of the block bounded by Broadway and Eighth Avenue and West 44th and 45th Streets. The eastern edge of this block was already occupied by the Astor Hotel, facing Broadway; to its west were the Shubert and Booth Theaters built by the Shuberts in 1911-12. The alley separating the hotel from the theaters became popularly known as "Shubert Alley." The Shuberts expanded to the west with the construction of the Plymouth and Broadhurst theaters, adjoining the Shubert and Booth, in 1916-17. With the construction of the Theatre Masque, Royale, and Majestic, and the Hotel Lincoln on Eighth Avenue, the Chanins completed the development of the block which has remained the densest concentration of legitimate theaters in New York. The block of West 45th Street between Broadway and Eighth Avenue eventually became known as "the street of hits."

The completion of the complex was marked by the Chanins in a gold rivet ceremony:

Yesterday, [Irwin] Chanin, in company with his brother, Henry I. Chanin, climbed to the top of their new thirty-story Lincoln Hotel at Eighth Avenue, Manhattan. There they pushed home the two golden rivets which completed the steel frame of the hotel, the fourth and last unit in their \$12,000,000 west side building operations, which, in addition to the hotel, includes three theatres, the Royale, Theatre Masque, and the Majestic, all opened this year.<sup>2</sup>

The three new Chanin theaters were intended from the first to serve different functions. According to a Chanin publicity brochure,

the Theatre Masque in West Forty-fifth Strteet, with 800 seats, is intended to be the home of fine plays of the 'artistic' or 'intimate' type....

while the Royale,

with 1200 seats, is a musical comedy theatre. The 1800-seat Majestic in West Forty-fourth Street, the largest legitimate theatre in the Times Square district, is expressly a house for revues and light operas. Thus there is an entente cordiale between players and audiences, even before the rise of the curtain, as each Chanin theatre is designed for a particular purpose....<sup>3</sup>

The Theatre Masque was planned as a small theater specifically to house "intimate" productions. Small, intimate houses were rare on Broadway because of land costs, but the Chanins were able to circumvent such problems by making the theater part of a large complex:

Art for art's sake but also for a profit is the object of the demonstration which the Chanins will seek to make in their newest theatre--the Theatre Masque--which is scheduled to open next Thursday night, February 24, with a production of their own, "Puppets of Passion," from the Italian of Rosso di San Secondo. The Theatre Masque will be dedicated to the type of play variously known as "fine," "artistic" and "worthy" and for which the lexicon of Broadway does not yet have a more specific term....

When they entered the theatrical field, the Chanins wondered at the comparatively small number of "artistic" successes that were profitable to their producers. Was it absolutely necessary to produce the bulk of our plays for the boob trade or was there some money reason which caused producers capable of presenting a better-than-ordinary class of drama to stick so closely to the so-called "popular" shows?

...The Chanins soon satisfied themselves that production costs and salaries were definitely fixed. The only opportunity to make the sledding easier for the fine play lay in house operation and it was obvious that a fine play to succeed at all must have a house in which it was not handicapped by reason of location.

The only solution was to find a way to build a theatre as good as the best and as well located, and to build it so that expenses chargeable to land value, interest and so on would be less than usual, also taking care to equip it so that actual operating costs were below the average.

The way out chosen was to build a theatre not as an isolated playhouse but as a part of a much greater building development where unit costs could be lowered through mass production.<sup>4</sup>

The Theatre Masque benefited from the "mass architecture" of the project, the economies of mass purchase of furnishings, and ultimately of mass administration.

Following the precedent of their Mansfield (now Brooks Atkinson) Theater, the Chanins had Herbert Krapp design the theater-hotel complex in what they called the "modern Spanish" manner. Although not identical designs, the facades of the three theaters are interrelated through the use of a rusticated terra-cotta base with a Roman-brick wall above, adorned with round-arched windows and terra-cotta Spanish Renaissance-inspired ornament. The Theatre Masque includes a centrally placed arcade with windows, and a colonnaded loggia with balustrade above the roof line. The Royale's facade is similar, but its central arcade is five bays wide, rather than three, and in place of a colonnaded loggia has an ornamental parapet. The chief ornaments of the Majestic's facade include a highly ornamental Palladian window with spiral columns, and two long wrought-iron galleries with Spanish-tile roofs.

The interior design of the Theatre Masque is also "modern Spanish" in style, matching that of the exterior. A deep, narrow, single-balcony house, its walls curve in to meet the elliptical proscenium arch. Its ornament includes such Spanish and Moorish motifs as twisted columns, pointed-arch openings, rough stucco surfacing, Moorish panels in low relief, cameos, decorative shields, and geometrically patterned panels.

The Chanins intended at this point in their career to launch themselves into the national theater scene. In October 1926, they announced

...that they have completed plans for "the maintenance and operation of a chain of theatres in New York and half a dozen other large cities in the United States." ...it is planned to build houses in Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland and Pittsburgh. Also, the two brothers have organized the Chanin Producing Company, and will immediately enter the field of play production on a large scale. The announcement by the Chanins is taken by theatrical men to mean the definite arrival, at an early date, of the so-called "third circuit" as a competitor of the Shubert and Erlanger Circuits.<sup>5</sup>

These plans never came to fruition, however, and the multi-theater and hotel project was the Chanins' last venture in theater building. Although the Chanins had announced that "their own plays will occupy the Theatre Masque a considerable share of the time,"<sup>6</sup> following its first year of operations, the theatre was leased to Robert Milton, "a well-known...stage director [who] has on several occasions ventured into management."<sup>7</sup>

The Chanins' hopes for the Theatre Masque never materialized, as the theater saw a series of short runs, and in 1930 they exchanged their interest in the Theatre Masque, as well as the Royale and Majestic, with the Shuberts, for an interest in the New Theater (later the Century Theater) on Central Park West.<sup>8</sup> The Shuberts turned the Royale Theater over to John Golden, who left his first theater, the Golden, on West 58th Street and renamed the Royale the Golden. In 1937, Golden moved his operations from the Golden (the old Royale) over to the adjoining Theatre Masque, and renamed that theater the Golden (making it the third theater of that name),<sup>9</sup> while the former Royale was leased to the Columbia Broadcasting Company.



John Golden (1874-1955) was an "actor, playwright, song writer, producer and successful businessman," as well as a philanthropist, whose shows catered to what Golden perceived as the public's desire for clean, unsophisticated theater:

To the theater-going public, John Golden's plays were distinguished chiefly by their folksy quality, homey humor and immaculate cleanliness. He was suspicious of the stark realism and "arty" quality of the theater in recent years: an onion, he said, could make people cry, but "name the vegetable that can make them laugh."

In his early hits he made the public laugh and did so without recourse to sex and cynicism. When the "sophistication" of the twenties, the stark realism of the thirties, the cynicism of the forties and the what-have-you of the fifties brought fortunes to other producers, he stuck by his original motto: "CHAP" -- "clean, humorous American plays."<sup>10</sup>

Golden was a major figure in American theater for four decades, from his first production in 1916, in collaboration with Winchell Smith, of Turn to the Right, to his last in 1953, a revival of The Male Animal, with some 150 productions in between. Golden was also an early backer of ASCAP (the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers), the founder of the Stage Relief Fund in 1932, and an organizer of Stage Door Canteens during World War II.

Golden ran the new Golden theater until 1946, when the Shuberts turned it over to an exhibitor of foreign films.<sup>11</sup> The Golden returned to legitimate use, under Shubert management, in 1948,<sup>12</sup> retaining its newer name. Although Golden's name has been attached to three Broadway theaters, and his tenure at the renamed Theatre Masque lasted not quite a decade, it is that theater, still known as the Golden, which is most closely associated today with his contribution to American theater. The year after his death, the Actors Fund of America, a theatrical charity, placed a memorial plaque to Golden on the theater in the presence of Mayor Wagner and other dignitaries and theatrical figures.<sup>13</sup>

(AR)

#### Notes

1. "Masque Opens Tonight," New York Times, February 24, 1927, p. 27.
2. "Made Fortune in 8 Years," New York Times, April 28, 1927, p. 40.
3. Chanin Theatres Corporation, A Renaissance in Theatre Craft: The Chanin Theatres (New York: Chanin Theatres Corporation [1927]).
4. "The Chanins to Try Art for Art's Sake in Newest Theatre, the Masque," New York Post, February 18, 1927.

5. "Chanins to Build Chain of Theatres," New York Times, October 24, 1926, p. 23.
6. "The Chanins to Try...."
7. "Leases Theatre Masque," New York Times, August 1, 1927, p. 25.
8. See above, p. 9.
9. "Redecorating the New John Golden Theatre," New York Post, January 26, 1937.
10. John Golden, obituary, New York Herald Tribune, June 18, 1955.
11. "B'way Loses Another Legit House, Golden Leased for Foreign Films," Variety, July 3, 1946, p. 45.
12. "Legit Recovers Golden," Variety, December 8, 1948.
13. "Plaque to Golden Is Unveiled Here," New York Times, December 22, 1956, p. 14.

### The Golden as a Playhouse<sup>1</sup>

The Theatre Masque, as a small theater presenting "intimate" drama, tended to house shows with small casts. Although its early history was plagued with short runs, the Golden eventually found success, particularly with one- and two-person revues.

The theater opened in February 1927 with Puppets of Passion, by Rosso Di San Secondo, an Italian playwright influenced by Pirandello. Lasting only twelve performances, the play set an unfortunate precedent for the theater, and was followed by a number of unsuccessful productions. The Comic by Lajos Luria ran just 15 performances starting in April 1927. It was followed by Patience, with James Watt and Vivian Hart, which ran 16 performances, and then Revelry by Maurice Watkins, with Berton Churchill and Eleanor Woodruff, which lasted 49 performances. The Scarlet Fox, opening in March 1928, lasted 79 performances, followed by Edward Clark's Relations, with Peggy Coudray and Horace Braham, which managed to last 105 performances. The theater finally scored a hit in December 1919, with John Drinkwater's Bird in Hand, but within a month the play moved to the Forrest Theater.

In 1930, Albert Hackett and Frances Goodrich's Up Pops the Devil reached 146 performances, and in December 1932 Goodbye Again, by Allan Scott and George Haight broke the 200 mark. In December 1933, one of the great hits of the thirties, Erskine Caldwell's Tobacco Road, opened at the Masque, but it soon moved to the 48th Street Theater.

In 1937, the Theatre Masque became the John Golden Theater. The pattern of short runs was not immediately affected, but some interesting plays were staged. One of the shortest runs was Curtain Call, which played four performances in March 1937, and was said to be based on the life story

of Eleanora Duse. Shadow and Substance, by Paul Vincent Carroll, produced by Eddie Dowling, and starring Sir Cedric Hardwicke, won the a prize for the most distinguished foreign play of the year, 1938, and played 206 performances.

After a number of very short runs, the Golden broke through its unfortunate pattern with Angel Street; opening in December 1941, it played almost 1300 performances. Rose Franken's Soldier's Wife ran a respectable 255 performances in 1944; S.N. Behrman's Dunnigan's Daughter played the Golden in 1945. The theater played movies from 1946 to 1950, except for a few short-run live productions including Maurice Chavalier's one-man show in February, 1948.

In 1950, the Golden staged Let's Make An Opera; despite its music by Benjamin Britten and staging by Marc Blitzstein, the show lasted just five performances. In 1953, on the other hand, Victor Borge held forth at the Golden in Comedy in Music, and played 849 performances. Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot played 59 performances (considered a remarkably long run for a work of the "theater of the absurd) in 1956, with Bert Lahr and E.G. Marshall in the cast. In 1959, A Desert Incident, by Pearl Buck, played only seven performances.

In August 1959, British comedians Michael Flanders and Donald Swann brought their revue At the Drop of a Hat to the Golden and played 216 performances. They were followed, in 1960, by An Evening with Mike Nichols and Elaine May, playing over 300 performances. Next came An Evening with Yves Montand in 1961 (55 performances). Dominating 1962 and 1963 were Alan Bennett, Peter Cook, Jonathan Miller, and Dudley Moore in Beyond the Fringe (673 performances). Victor Borge returned to the Golden in 1964 in Comedy in Music (192 performances). Leon Gluckman's Wait a Minim! played 457 performances in 1966. The rest of the 1960s was taken up by short runs.

In 1970, Bob and Ray -- the Two and Only came to the Golden (158 performances). You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown, based on the "Peanuts" comic strip by Charles M. Schulz, moved to Broadway after an Off-Broadway run of 1597 performances and played 32 performances at the Golden. David Rabe's Sticks and Bones (245 performances) won Tony awards for Elizabeth Wilson ("Best Supporting Actress") and for itself ("Best Play"). In 1974 Sammy Cahn starred in Words & Music (127 performances). P.S. Your Cat Is Dead played 16 performances in 1975. Tom Stoppard's Dirty Linen and New-Found-Land played 159 performances at the Golden in 1977. It was followed the same year by Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy (succeeded by E.G. Marshall and Maureen Stapleton) in D.L. Coburn's The Gin Game, which played a total of 517 performances and won a Pulitzer Prize in 1978.

Lillian Hellman's Watch on the Rhine was revived at the Golden in March 1980 (36 performances). Later that year A Day in Hollywood, A Night in the Ukraine, choreographed by Tommy Tune, ran for 588 performances. In 1981, Beth Henley's Crimes of the Heart moved to the Golden from the Manhattan Theatre Club. Recently, David Mamet's Glengarry Glen Ross ran successfully at the Golden, and in 1984 won a Tony award.

## Notes

1. This production history of the Golden Theater, condensed from the fuller version in the Appendix, is based on listings compiled by Actors Equity and submitted as testimony at the Landmarks Preservation Commission's public hearings of June and October, 1982. Their submission has been checked by Landmarks Commission staff against George Freedley, "Broadway Playhouses," bound typescript of the "Stage Today," 1941-43, Billy Rose Theater Collection, Lincoln Center Branch, New York Public Library; The Best Plays of...[annual] (New York: Dodd Mead and Co., 1899-present); Theatre World [annual] Daniel Blum, editor (New York: Theatre World, 1946-present), The Biographical Encyclopedia & Who's Who of the American Theater, Walter Rigdon, editor (New York: James H. Heinman, Inc., 1966); Edwin Bronner, The Encyclopedia of American Theater, 1900-1975 (New York: A.S. Barnes & Co., Inc., 1980); Gerald Bordman, Oxford Companion to American Theatre (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

## Description<sup>1</sup>

### Auditorium:

1) Configuration: The configuration of the auditorium consists of a relatively small, single-balconied space which is deeper than it is wide; an orchestra; a proscenium; an orchestra promenade; a ceiling; a stage opening behind the proscenium arch; and the sloping floor extending towards the proscenium arch. (The Golden Theater has no boxes.)

Orchestra: The eastern wall skews in to accommodate the restraints of the site.

Proscenium: The proscenium is elliptically arched.

Balcony: There is a single balcony. It is divided into two tiers by a crossover aisle. The balcony front curves forward to meet the side walls.

Staircases: Two staircase at the rear corners lead up to the balcony.

Walls: Both walls curve in gently towards the proscenium arch.

Ceiling: The ceiling is divided into coved sections.

Floor: The floor is raked.

Stage: the stage extends behind the proscenium arch and forms a stage picture (visible from the audience) framed by the proscenium arch.<sup>2</sup>

Promenade: A promenade is located at the rear of the orchestra, created by the insertion of a modern wall.

## 2) Ornament:

The decorative ornament is low-relief plasterwork, which is integrated into the surfaces which define the configuration of the auditorium. Decorative ornament includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Proscenium arch: The proscenium is framed by paired twisted columns supporting colonnettes rising to impost level. The arch is outlined by a wide, geometrically-patterned band.

Orchestra: One enters the auditorium through center doors at the rear. The wall sections adjacent to the proscenium (where boxes are traditionally placed) are articulated by pointed-arch openings at orchestra level. Paired doors are flanked by twisted columns. Decorative panels contain exit signs above the door. A decorative shield is placed on the wall above the pointed arch. Flat pilasters with ornamental panels mark the front edge of the balcony at orchestra level; otherwise the side and rear walls contain little decoration but are surfaced with a rough stucco.

Orchestra promenade: The rear wall is surfaced with rough stucco. The ceiling is articulated by decorative bands.

Balcony: A simple cornice with geometric frieze sets off the ceiling of the underside of the balcony at the side and rear walls. At balcony level, the walls are also surfaced with rough stucco and contain Moorish panels in low relief. Exit doors set in pointed-arch openings detailed like those at the orchestra level are placed in the side walls at the front of the balcony. The balcony front (now covered over by a modern light box, see below under "alterations") is adorned with geometrically-paneled panels. The underside of the balcony is subdivided into geometrically-patterned panels in low-relief plasterwork.

Ceiling: Much of the decorative focus of design is on the ceiling, divided into coved sections by arched ribs spanning the ceiling. Each arch rises from corbels flanked by twisted colonnettes on the side walls. The ribs are adorned in low-relief plasterwork with geometric patterns, shields, cameos. A geometrically-paneled frieze encircles the space just below the ceiling. The rear section of the ceiling above the balcony is flat with a large plasterwork panel; this helps enclose the technical booth set in the cove, which is original to the theater.

## 3) Attached fixtures:

Balcony: Decorative metal railings are placed by the balcony front at the corners.

Ceiling: Grille panels enclose the front of the technical booth in the ceiling cove.

Staircases: Decorative metal railings mark the staircase openings at the crossover level of the balcony.

Light fixtures: The existing light fixtures are stylistically compatible with the auditorium. Original candelabra wall sconces are placed on the side and rear walls at both levels of the auditorium. A large ornate chandelier with candelabra is suspended from the ceiling.

4) Known alterations:

Much of the balcony front is now covered over by a modern light box. Air conditioning vents and grilles have been installed in the walls and ceiling. A secondary wall has been erected at the rear of the orchestra seats. This intersects the underside of the balcony. Painted panels originally flanked the corbels of the ceiling ribs and were placed above the proscenium. The plasterwork treatment of the side and rear walls has been simplified. The current color scheme dates from 1980 and enhances the effect of the ornament.

(MP)

Notes

1. This description identifies the spaces that are included in this designation. Specific elements are listed and architecturally significant features are underlined as explained in the "Guidelines for Treatment of Theater Interiors" as adopted by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on December 10, 1985.
2. For the purposes of this description, the stage shall include the enclosing walls and roof of the stage house and a floor area behind the proscenium arch, but not any fixture or feature of or within that space.

Conclusion

The Golden Theater Interior survives today as one of the historic theater interiors that symbolize American theater for both New York and the nation. One of the group of theaters constructed for the Chanin Organization during the 1920s, it helped shape the character of the Broadway theater district. Designed for the Chanins by Herbert J. Krapp, the most prolific architect of the Broadway theater district, the Golden represents a typical and important aspect of the nation's theatrical history. As part of the Chanins' multi-use project of three theaters and a hotel, the Golden helped complete the development of "Shubert Alley," the heart of the theater district. An "intimate" theater, seating only 800, its small size was made possible economically by its inclusion in the larger project. Its interior, in the "Modern Spanish" style Krapp developed for Chanin's later theaters, is a handsome design, matching the style of the exterior.

For half a century the Golden Theater Interior has served as home to countless numbers of the plays through which the Broadway theater has come to personify American theater. As such, it continues to help define the Broadway theater district, the largest and most famous concentration of legitimate stage theaters in the world.

The preparation of this report has involved the work of a number of consultants supervised and edited by Anthony W. Robins (AR), Deputy Director of Research. Individual authors are noted by initials at the ends of their sections. The consultants were Margaret Knapp (MMK), Eugenie Hoffmeyer (EH), Felicia Dryden (FD), Andrew S. Dolkart (ASD) and Peter Donhauser (PD). Gale Harris of the Research Department supplemented the research, verified the citations and sources, and provided editorial assistance. Marjorie Pearson (MP), Director of Research, wrote the description. Research Department staff who contributed to the report include Marion Cleaver, Virginia Kurshan, Susan Strauss, and Jay Shockley.

The New York Landmarks Preservation Commission gratefully acknowledges the assistance rendered by many concerned citizens in studying the Broadway theaters. Special thanks are due the New York City Planning Commission; Community Planning Board 5, Manhattan; the New York Landmarks Conservancy; the Actors Equity Committee to Save the Theaters; and the individual theater owners.

## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this Interior, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Golden Theater, first floor interior consisting of the auditorium, the stage, the staircases leading from the first floor to the balcony floor; the balcony floor interior consisting of the balcony, the upper part of the auditorium and ceiling; and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall and ceiling surfaces, doors, stair railings and attached decorative elements; has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City, New York State, and the nation, and the Interior or parts thereof are thirty years old or more, and that the Interior is one which is customarily open and accessible to the public, and to which the public is customarily invited.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Golden Theater Interior survives today as one of the historic theater interiors that symbolize American theater for both New York and the nation; that, built in 1926-27, it was among the group of theaters constructed for the Chanin Organization during the 1920s which helped shape the character of the Broadway theater district; that it was designed for the Chanins by Herbert J. Krapp, the most prolific architect of the Broadway theater district; that as a Chanin theater designed by Herbert Krapp it represents a typical and important aspect of the nation's theatrical history; that its interior is a fine example of the "Modern Spanish" style with which Herbert Krapp adorned the later Chanin theaters; that among its significant architectural characteristics are its elliptical proscenium arch supported by paired twisted columns, rough stucco walls, Moorish-style panels, and coved ceiling; that for half a century the Golden Theater Interior has served as home to countless numbers of the plays through which the Broadway theater has come to personify American theater; and that as such it continues to help define the Broadway theater district, the largest and most famous concentration of legitimate stage theaters in the world.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 21, Section 534, of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as an Interior Landmark the Golden Theater, first floor interior consisting of the auditorium, the stage, the staircases leading from the first floor to the balcony floor; the balcony floor interior consisting of the balcony, the upper part of the auditorium and ceiling; and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall and ceiling surfaces, doors, stair railings and attached decorative elements; 252-256 West 45th Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1016, Lot 58, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.



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## APPENDIX

The following production history of the Golden Theater is based on listings compiled by Actors Equity and submitted as testimony at the Landmarks Preservation Commission's public hearings of June and October, 1982. Their submission has been checked by Gale Harris and Susan Strauss of the Research Department staff against George Freedley, "Broadway Playhouses," bound typescript of the "Stage Today," 1941-43, Billy Rose Theater Collection, Lincoln Center Branch, New York Public Library; The Best Plays of.... [annual] (New York: Dodd Mead and Co., 1899-present); Theatre World [annual] Daniel Blum, editor (New York: Theatre World, 1946-present), The Biographical Encyclopedia & Who's Who of the American Theater, Walter Rigdon, editor (New York: James H. Heinman, Inc., 1966); Edwin Bronner, The Encyclopedia of American Theater, 1900-1975 (New York: A.S. Barnes & Co., Inc., 1980); Gerald Bordman, Oxford Companion to American Theatre (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

### 1927

PUPPETS OF PASSION 2/24/27 (12 perfs.) by Rosso di San Secondo; with Frank Morgan, Rose Hobart and Edith Leitner.

THE COMIC 4/19/27 (15 perfs.) by Lajos Luria; with J.C. Nugent, Patricia Collinge and Cyril Keightley.

PATIENCE 5/23/27 (16 perfs.) by W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan; with Vivian Hart and James Watt.

REVELRY 9/12/27 (49 perfs.) by Maurine Watkins from a novel by Samuel Hopkins Adams; with Berton Churchill, Rose Hobart and Eleanor Woodruff.

THE KING CAN DO NO WRONG 11/16/27 (13 perfs.) by F.S. Merlin; with Felix Krembs, Lionel Atwill and Leona Hogarth.

VENUS 12/26/27 (8 perfs.) by Rachel Crothers; with Cecilia Loftus, Tyrone Power and Patricia Collinge.

### 1928

CARRY ON 1/23/28 (8 perfs.) by Owen Davis; with Berton Churchill, Owen Davis, Jr. and Beatrice Terry.

QUICKSAND 2/13/28 (16 perfs.) by Warren F. Lawrence; with Robert Ames, Anne Forrest and C.W. Van Voorhis.

THE SCARLET FOX 3/27/28 (79 perfs.) by Willard Mack; with Marie Chambers. Willard Mack and Joseph Sweeney.

PATIENCE 6/25/28 (24 perfs.) by W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan; with Mary Bokee and Henry Miller.

RELATIONS 8/20/28 (105 perfs.) by Edward Clark; with Horace Braham, Edward Clark and Peggy Coudry.

YOUNG LOVE 10/30/28 (87 perfs.) by Samson Raphaelson; with Dorothy Gish and James Rennie.

1929

THE SUBWAY 2/5/29 (23 perfs.) by Elmer Rice; with Jane Hamilton and Louis John Latzer.

THE FIRST LAW 5/6/29 (8 perfs.) by Dmitry Scheglov; with Frances Carson, Reginald Goode and Leonid Snegoff.

ROPE'S END 9/19/29 (100 perfs.) by Patrick Hamilton; with Sebastian Shaw, Ivan Brandt and Ernest Milton.

THE AMOROUS ANTIC 12/2/29 (8 perfs.) by Ernest Pascal; with Phoebe Foster, Alan Mowbray and Frank Morgan.

BIRD IN HAND 12/9/29 (500 total perfs.) by John Drinkwater (moved to the Forrest Theater 1/6/30).

1930

BROKEN DISHES 1/27/30 (165 total perfs.) by Martin Flavin; with Donald Meek, Etha Dack and Bette Davis (first opened at the Ritz Theater 11/5/29).

THEY NEVER GROW UP 4/7/30 (24 perfs.) by Humphrey Pearson; with Anne Sutherland, Otto Kruger and Mary Fowler.

GOLD BRAID 5/13/30 (7 perfs.) by Ann Shelby; with Marion Abbott, Edward Reese, Adele Ronson and Alan Devitt.

THROUGH THE NIGHT 8/18/30 (8 perfs.) by Samuel Ruskin Golding and Paul Dickey; with Helen MacKellar, Noel Tearle, George MacQuarrie and George Spelvin.

UP POPS THE DEVIL 9/1/30 (146 perfs.) by Albert Hackett and Frances Goodrich; with Albert Hackett, Sally Bates, Roger Pryor and Janet McLeay.

1931

JOY OF LIVING 4/6/31 (16 perfs.) by Ruolph Lothar and Hans Backwitz.

BRASS ANKLE 4/23/31 (42 perfs.) by DuBose Heyward; with Alice Brady and Ben Smith.

PAID COMPANIONS 6/22/31 (8 perfs.) by Bernard J. McOwen; with Lee Smith and Hal Clarendon.

THE VENETIAN 10/31/31 (9 perfs.) by Clifford Bax; with Margaret Rawlings, Wilfred Walter and Alaistair Sim.

LOUDER, PLEASE 11/12/31 (68 perfs.) by Norman Krasna; with Percy Kilbride, Louise Brooks and Lee Tracy.

1932

THE HOUSE OF DOOM 1/25/32 (8 perfs.) by Charles K. Champlin; with Robert Brister and Charles K. Champlin.

THE CHAMELEON 7/18/32 (8 perfs.) by Adam Gostony.

TRIPLETS 9/21/32 (3 perfs.) by Mark Linder.

THE BARRISTER 11/21/32 (8 perfs.) by Sydney Stone.

GOODBYE AGAIN 12/28/32 (212 perfs.) by Allan Scott and George Haight; with Osgood Perkins, Sally Bates and Katherine Squire.

1933

\$25 AN HOUR 5/10/33 (22 perfs.) by Gladys Unger and Leyla Georgie; with Georges Metaxa and Jean Arthur.

THE GHOST WRITER 6/19/33 (24 perfs.) by Martin Mooney; with William Frawley, Ara Gerald, Peggy Conklin and Frederick G. Lewis.

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING? 11/9/33 (12 perfs.) by Lennox Robinson; with Margaret Wycherly, Jerome Lawlor and John McCarthy.

TOBACCO ROAD 12/4/33 (3,182 total perfs.) by Jack Kirkland based on a novel by Erskine Caldwell; with Ann Dere and James Barton. (Moved to Forty-Eighth Street Theater 1/15/34, then to the Forrest Theatre 9/17/34.)

1934

NO QUESTIONS ASKED 2/5/34 (16 perfs.) by Anne Morrison Chapin; with Spring Byington, Milo Boulton, Barbara Robbins and Ross Alexander.

TOO MUCH PARTY 3/5/34 (8 perfs.) by Hiram Sherman; with Pierre Watkin, Maude Richmond, Reed McClellan and Janet McLeay.

INVITATION TO A MURDER 5/17/34 (52 perfs.) by Rufus King; with Humphrey Bogart, James Shelburne, Walter Abel and Gale Sondergaard.

POST ROAD 12/4/34 (210 perfs.) by Wilbur Daniel Steele and Norma Mitchell; with Percy Kilbride, Lucile Watson and Edward Fielding.

1935

CROSS RUFF 2/19/35 (7 perfs.) by Noel Taylor; with Jay Fassett, Edith King and Noel Taylor.

LABURNUM GROVE 3/2/35 (130 total perfs.) by J.B. Priestley; with Edmund Gwenn. (First opened at the Booth Theater 1/14/35.)

WEATHER PERMITTING 5/23/35 (4 perfs.) by Edward Sargent Brown; with Viola Frayne and Matthew Smith.

EDEN END 10/21/35 (24 perfs.) by J.B. Priestley; with Estelle Winwood, Wilfred Seagram and Edgar Norfolk.

CONTINENTAL VARIETIES 12/26/35 (9 perfs.); with Lucienne Boyer.

1936

RUSSET MANTLE 1/16/36 (116 perfs.) by Lynn Riggs; with John Beal, Martha Sleeper and Jay Fassett.

PRIVATE AFFAIR 5/14/36 (28 perfs.) by Gaston Valcourt.

GREEN WATERS 11/4/36 (5 perfs.) by Max Catto; with Dennis O'Dea and Reginald Bach.

THE HOLMESES OF BAKER STREET 12/9/36 (53 perfs.) by Basil Mitchell; with Helen Chandler, Cecilia Loftus and Arthur Marlowe.

RENAMED JOHN GOLDEN THEATER 1937

1937

AND NOW GOODBYE 2/2/37 (25 perfs.) by Philip Howard based on a novel by James Hilton; with Philip Merivale and Marguerite Churchill.

ARMS FOR VENUS 3/11/37 (12 perfs.) by Randolph Carter; with Hortense Alden and Alan Davis.

BET YOUR LIFE 4/5/37 (8 perfs.) by Fritz Blocki and Willie Howard; with Lew Hearn and John Call.

CURTAIN CALL 4/22/37 (4 perfs.) by LeRoy Bailey; with Guido Nadzo, Ara Gerald and Selena Royle.

PLACES, PLEASE! 11/12/37 (3 perfs.) by Aurania Rouverol; with Ruth Abbott, Matthew Smith, Lillian Emerson and Don Dillaway.

LOVE OF WOMEN 12/13/37 (8 perfs.) by Aimee and Philip Smart; with Cathleen Cordell, Valerie Taylor, Heather Angel, Leo G. Carroll and Molly Pearson.



1938

SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE 1/26/38 (206 perfs.) by Paul Vincent Carroll; with Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Henry Sothorn, Sara Allgood and Julie Haydon (moved to the Plymouth Theater 9/12/38).

LIGHTNIN' 9/15/38 (54 perfs.) by Winchell Smith and Frank Bacon; with Fred Stone, George Spelvin and Mrs. Priestley Morrison.

MICHAEL DROPS IN 12/27/38 (8 perfs.) by William DuBois; with Arlene Francis and Onslow Stevens.

1939

WHERE THERE'S A WILL 1/17/39 (7 perfs.) by Edward Stirling, adapted from the French play by Sacha Guitry; with Edward Sterling and Jessie Royce Landis.

HERE COME THE CLOWNS 1/23/39 (88 total perfs.) by Philip Barry; with Eddie Dowling. (First opened at the Booth 12/7/38).

CLOSE QUARTERS 3/6/39 (8 perfs.) by Gilbert Lennox; with Elena Miramova and Leo Chalzel.

THE WHITE STEED 3/27/39 (136 total perfs.) by Paul Vincent Carroll; with Barry Fitzgerald, Jessica Tandy and George Coulouris. (First opened at the Cort 1/10/39; moved several times.)

CLEAN BEDS 5/25/39 (4 perfs.) by George S. George; with Nat Burns and Alfred Alderic.

ARIES IS RISING 11/21/39 (7 perfs.) by Caroline North and Earl Blackwell; with Mary Mason, Blanche Sweet and John Craven.

1940

THE WEAK LINK 3/4/40 (32 perfs.) by Allen Wood; with Hume Cronyn and Peggy French.

RETURN ENGAGEMENT 11/1/40 (8 perfs.) by Lawrence Riley; with Mady Christians and Bert Lytell.

1941

BOUDOIR 2/7/41 (11 perfs.) by Jacques Deval; with Helen Twelvetrees, Staats Cotsworth and Henry Brandon.

THEY WALK ALONE 3/12/41 (21 perfs.) by Max Catto; with Elsa Lanchester, John Moore and Olive Deering.

SNOOKIE 6/3/41 (15 perfs.) by Thomas A. Johnstone; with Eddie Nugent, Florenz Ames and Lawrence Weber.

BROTHER CAIN 9/12/41 (19 perfs.) by Michael Kalleser and Richard Norcross; with Frederic de Wilde and Richard Karlen.

LITTLE DARK HORSE 11/16/41 (9 perfs.) by Andre Birabeau, adapted from the French comedy by Theresa Helburn; with Walter Slezak.

ANGEL STREET 12/5/41 (1,293 perfs.) by Patrick Hamilton; with Vincent Price, Judith Evelyn and Leo G. Carroll.

1944

SOLDIERS WIFE 10/4/44 (255 perfs.) by Rose Franken; with Myron McCormick, Martha Scott, Frieda Inescort and Glenn Anders.

1945

THE RICH FULL LIFE 11/9/45 (27 perfs.) by Vina Delmar; with Judith Evelyn, Ann Shoemaker and Edith Meiser.

DUNNIGAN'S DAUGHTER 12/26/45 (38 perfs.) by S.N. Behrman; with Richard Widmark, Luther Adler, Dennis King and June Havoc.

1946

JANUARY THAW 2/4/46 (48 perfs.) by William Roos, based on novel by Bellamy Partridge; with Helen Carew, Robert Keith and Lorna Lynn.

I LIKE IT HERE 3/22/46 (51 perfs.) by A.B. Shiffrin; with Bert Lytell, Mardi Bryant and William Terry.

THEATER LEASED TO FOREIGN FILM EXHIBITOR JULY 1946 - 1950

1948

MAURICE CHEVALIER 2/29/48 (33 perfs.).

OH, MR. MEADOWBROOK! 12/26/48 (41 perfs.) by Ronald Telfer and Pauline Jameson; with Ernest Truex, Sylvia Field and Vicki Cummings.

1949

ANYBODY HOME 2/25/49 (5 perfs.) by Robert Pyzel; with Phyllis Holden, Donald Curtis and Roger Clark.

1950

THE VELVET GLOVE 2/13/50 (152 total perfs.) by Rosemary Casey; with Walter Hampden, Grace George and Barbara Brady. (First opened at the Booth Theater 12/26/49).

LET'S MAKE AN OPERA 12/13/50 (5 perfs.) by Eric Crozier, music by Benjamin Britten; with Jo Sullivan.

1951

THE GREEN BAY TREE 2/1/51 (20 perfs.) by Mordaunt Shairp; with Joseph Schildkraut and Anne Crawford.

SPRINGTIME FOLLY 2/26/51 (2 perfs.) by Joseph Schulman and William H. Lieberson; with Jack Whiting.

SPRINGTIME FOR HENRY 3/14/51 (53 total perfs.) by Benn W. Levy; with Edward Everett Horton. (Moved to Booth Theater 4/2/51.)

TO DOROTHY A SON 11/19/51 (8 perfs.) by Roger MacDougal.

1952

EMLYN WILLIAMS AS CHARLES DICKENS 2/4/52 (48 perfs.).

PARIS '90 4/21/52 (87 total perfs.) sketches written and preformed by Cornelia Otis Stinner. (First opened at the Booth Theater 3/14/52).

SEAGULLS OVER SORRENTO 9/11/52 (12 perfs.) by Hugh Hastings; with Mark Rydell, Leslie Nielsen and Rod Steiger.

1953

COMEDY IN MUSIC (Victor Borge) 10/2/53 (849 perfs.)

1956

THE HOT CORNER 1/25/56 (5 perfs.) by Allen Boretz and Ruby Sully; with Sam Levene and Vicki Cummings.

THE INNKEEPERS 2/2/56 (4 perfs.) by Theodore Apskin; with Darren McGavin and Geraldine Page.

SOMEONE WAITING 2/14/56 (15 perfs.) by Emlyn Williams; with Leo G. Carroll and Jessie Royce Landis.

LITTLE GLASS CLOCK 3/26/56 (8 perfs.) by Hugh Mills; with Eva Gabor.

WAITING FOR GODOT 4/19/56 (59 perfs.) by Samuel Beckett; with Bert Lahr, E.G. Marshall and Kurt Kaszner.

DOUBLE IN HEARTS 10/16/56 (6 perfs.) by Paul Nathan.

UNCLE WILLIE 12/20/56 (140 perfs.) by Julie Berns and Irving Elman; with Menasha Skulnik.

1957

MASK AND GOWN 9/10/57 (39 perfs.); Revue with T.C. Jones, Betty Carr, Rod Strong and Gaby Monet.

MONIQUE 10/22/57 (63 perfs.) by Dorothy and Michael Blankfort.

1958

CLOUD 7 2/14/58 (11 perfs.) by Max Wilk; with John McGiver and Martha Scott.

LOOK BACK IN ANGER 3/17/58 (407 total perfs.) by John Osborne; with Kenneth Heigh, Alan Bates, Mary Ure and Vivienne Drummond. (First opened at Lyceum Theatre 10/1/57.)

EPITAPH FOR GEORGE DILLON 11/4/58 (23 perfs.) by John Osborne and Anthony Creighton; with Eileen Herlie.

THE NIGHT CIRCUS 12/1/58 (7 perfs.) by Michael V. Gazzo; with Ben Gazzara and Janice Rule.

A PARTY WITH BETTY COMDEN AND ADOLPH GREEN 12/33/58 (38 perfs.).

1959

REQUIEM FOR A NUN 1/30/59 (43 perfs.) by William Faulkner; with Ruth Ford and Zachary Scott.

MASQUERADE 3/16/59 (1 perf.) by Sigmund Miller; with Donald Cook, Glenda Farrell and Cloris Leachman.

A DESERT INCIDENT 3/24/59 (7 perfs.) by Pearl S. Buck; with Cameron Prud'homme.

A PARTY WITH BETTY COMDEN AND ADOLPH GREEN 4/16/59 (44 perfs.). Return engagement.

BILLY BARNES REVUE 8/4/59 (87 total perfs.) by Bob Rodgers, music and lyrics by Billy Barnes; with Joyce Jameson and Bert Convy. (Moved to the Lyceum Theater 9/28/59.)

AT THE DROP OF A HAT 10/8/59 (216 perfs.) songs written and performed by Michael Flanders and Donald Swann.

1960

AN EVENING WITH MIKE NICHOLS AND ELAINE MAY 10/8/60 (306 perfs.).

1961

AN EVENING WITH YVES MONTAND 10/24/61 (55 perfs.).

1962

SUNDAY IN NEW YORK 1/3/62 (189 total perfs.) by Norman Krasna; with Robert Redford, Conrad Janis and Pat Stanley. (First opened at the Cort Theater 11/29/61.)

BEYOND THE FRINGE 10/27/62 (673 perfs.) written and performed by Alan Bennett, Peter Cook, Jonathan Miller and Dudley Moore.

1964

COMEDY IN MUSIC, OPUS II 11/9/64 (192 perfs.) with Victor Borge.

1965

KEN MURRAY'S HOLLYWOOD 5/10/65 (18 perfs.), movies made and narrated by Ken Murray.

MRS. DALLY 9/22/65 (52 perfs.) by William Hanley; with Arlene Francis.

ME AND THEE 12/7/65 (1 perf.) with Durward Kirby and Barbara Britton.

1966

WAIT A MINIM! 3/7/66 (457 perfs.) revue with Andrew and Paul Tracey, April Orlich and Kendrew Lascelles.

1967

AFTER THE RAIN 10/9/67 (64 perfs.) by John Bowen; with Nancy Marchand and Alec McCowen.

BRIEF LIVES 12/18/67 (16 perfs.) by Patrick Garland, adapted from the works of John Aubrey; with Roy Dotrice.

1968

CARRY ME BACK TO MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS 2/27/68 (7 perfs.) by Robert Alan Arthur; with David Steinberg, Lou Gossett and Cicely Tyson.

THE EXERCISE 4/24/68 (5 perfs.) by Lewis John Carlino; with Anne Jackson and Stephen Joyce.

THE MEGILLA OF ITZIK MANGER 10/9/68 (78 perfs.).

1969

THE WRONG WAY LIGHT BULB 3/4/69 (7 perfs.) by Leonard Spigelgass; with Nancy Pollock, Miriam Colon and James Patterson.

THE GINGHAM DOG 4/23/69 (5 perfs.) by Lanford Wilson; with George Grizzard, Roy London, Diana Sands and Karen Grassle.

1970

BRIGHTTOWER 1/28/70 (1 perf.) by Dore Schary; with Paul McGrath, Robert Lansing and Geraldine Brooks.

BLOOD RED ROSES 3/22/70 (1 perf.) by John Lewin, music by Michael Valenti.

PARK 4/22/70 (5 perfs.) by Paul Cherry; with Don Scardino, Joan Hackett and Julie Wilson.

BOB AND RAY -- THE TWO AND ONLY 9/24/70 (158 perfs.).

1971

FATHER'S DAY 3/16/71 (1 perf.) by Oliver Hailey; with Brenda Vaccaro and Biff McGuire.

YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, CHARLIE BROWN 6/1/71 (32 perfs.) by John Gordon; with Stephen Fanning, Liz O'Neal, Dean Stolber and Grant Cowan.

SOLITAIRE/DOUBLE SOLITAIRE 9/30/71 (36 perfs.) by Robert Anderson; with Joyce Ebert, Richard Venture, Will Fenno and Patricia Percy.

1972

STICKS & BONES 3/1/72 (245 perfs.) by David Rabe; with Elizabeth Wilson, Tom Aldredge, Drew Snyder and Cliff DeYoung.

1973

SHELTER 2/6/73 (31 perfs.) by Gretchen Cryer.

1974

WORDS & MUSIC 4/16/74 (127 perfs.); with Sammy Cahn.

1975

HUGHIE by Eugene O'Neill/DUET by David Scott Milton 2/11/75 (31 perfs.); with Ben Gazzara and Peter Maloney.

P.S. YOUR CAT IS DEAD! 4/7/75 (16 perfs.) by James Kirkwood; with Tony Musante and Keir Dullea.

KENNEDY'S CHILDREN 11/3/75 (72 perfs.) by Robert Patrick; with Shirley Knight.

1976

ME JACK, YOU JILL 3/31/76 (2 perfs.) by Robes Kossez; with Lisa Kirk and Sylvia Sidney.

GOING UP 9/19/76 (49 perfs.) book and lyrics by Otto Harbach, music by Louis A. Hirsch; with Brad Blandell and Kimberly Farr.

1977

DIRTY LINEN/NEW-FOUND-LAND 1/11/77 (159 perfs.) by Tom Stoppard; with Remak Ramsay, Francis Belhencourt and Cecilia Hart.

THE GIN GAME 10/6/77 (517 perfs.) by D.L. Coburn; with Jessica Tandy and Hume Cronyn.

1979

STRANGERS 3/4/79 (9 perfs.) by Sherman Yellen; with Bruce Dern.

MURDER AT THE HOWARD JOHNSON'S 5/17/79 (4 perfs.) by Ron Clark and Sam Bobrick; with Joyce Van Patten, Tony Roberts and Bob Dishy.

DEVOUR THE SNOW 11/7/79 (5 perfs.) by Abe Polsky; with Jon DeVries, Eddie Jones and Gloria Maddox.

1980

WATCH ON THE RHINE 1/3/80 (36 perfs.) by Lillian Hellman; with George Hearn, Jill Kikenberry, Robert Judd and Jan Miner.

HOROWITZ & MRS. WASHINGTON 4/2/80 (6 perfs.) by Henry Denker; with Sam Levene and Esther Rolle.

A DAY IN HOLLYWOOD/A NIGHT IN THE UKRAINE 5/1/80 (588 total perfs.) book and lyrics by Dick Vosburgh, music by Frank Lazarus; with Stephen Jacobs, Priscilla Lopez and David Garrison. (Moved to the Royale 6/17/80.)

THEATER CLOSED FOR RENOVATION SUMMER 1980

1980

TINTYPES 10/23/80 (93 perfs.) by Mary Kyte, Mel Marvin and Gary Pearle;  
with Lynn Thigpen, Troy Wilson and Jerry Zaks.

1981

IT HAD TO BE YOU 5/10/81 (48 perfs.) written and performed by Renee Taylor  
and Joseph Bologna.

CRIMES OF THE HEART 11/4/81 (535 perfs.) by Beth Henley; with Mary Beth  
Hurt and Peter MacNicol.

1983

'NIGHT MOTHER 3/31/83 (380 perfs.) by Marsha Norman; with Anne Pitoniak  
and Kathy Bates.

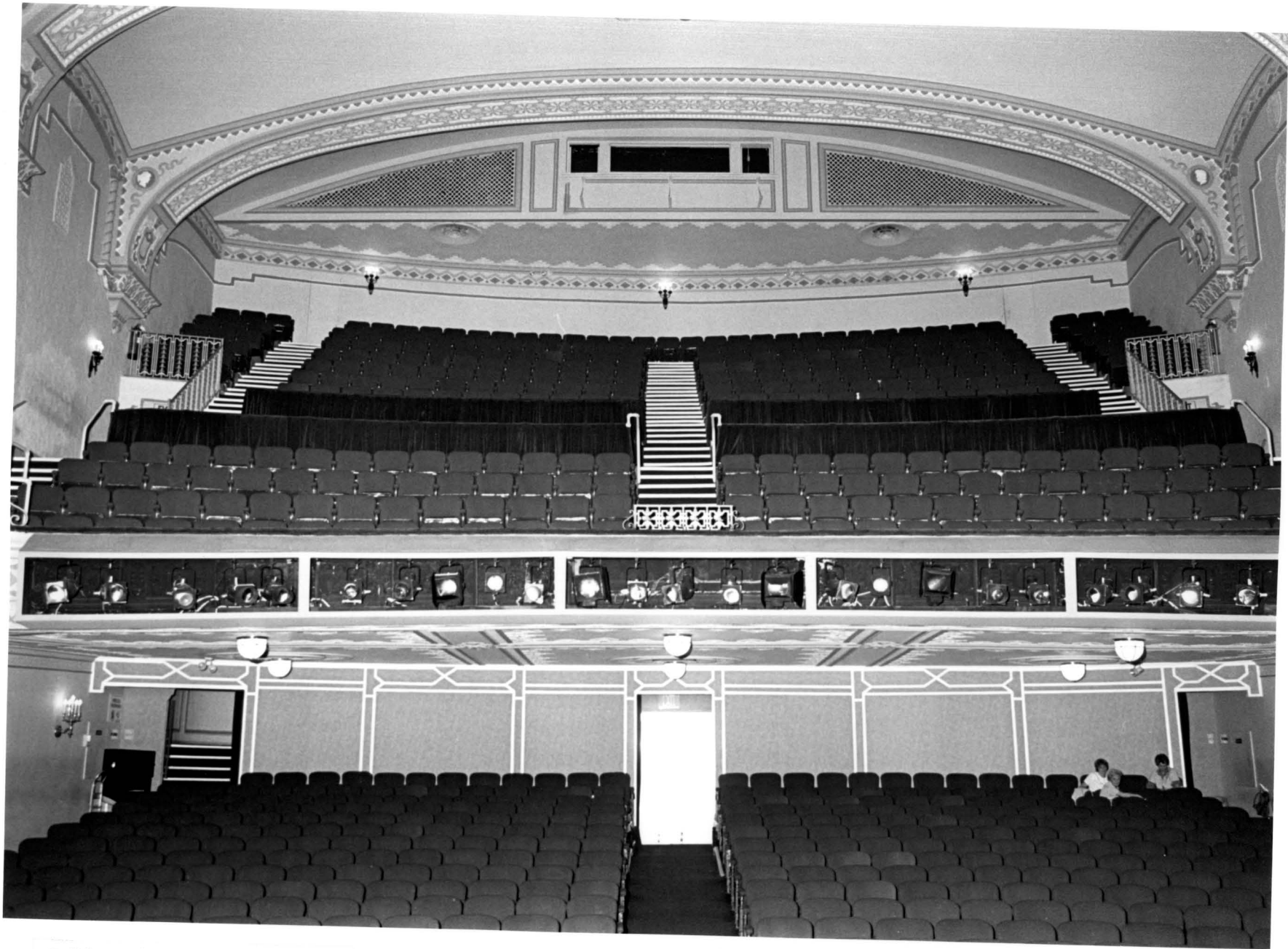
1984

GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS 3/25/84 (378 perfs.) by David Mamet; with Joe Mantegna  
and J.T. Walsh.





Golden Theater Interior



Golden Theater Interior



Golden Theater Interior  
252-256 West 45th Street  
Manhattan

Built: 1926-27  
Architect: Herbert J. Krapp

Photo: Forster, LPC