

Landmarks Preservation Commission
December 8, 1987; Designation List 197
LP-1357

HENRY MILLER THEATER, 124-130 West 43rd Street, Manhattan; built 1917-18; architects, Allen, Ingalls & Hoffman.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 995, Lot 45.

On June 14 and 15, 1982, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Henry Miller Theater and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 53). The hearing was continued to October 19, 1982. Both hearings had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Eighty witnesses spoke or had statements read into the record in favor of designation. Two witnesses spoke in opposition to designation. The owner, with his representatives, appeared at the hearing, and indicated that he had not formulated an opinion regarding designation. The Commission has received many letters and other expressions of support in favor of this designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Henry Miller Theater survives today as one of the historic playhouses that symbolize American theater for both New York and the nation. Constructed in 1917-18, the Henry Miller was designed to the specifications of producer/director Henry W. Miller, by architects Allen, Ingalls and Hoffman. The theater remained home to Miller's production for the rest of his life.

Henry Miller, as actor, director and producer, was one of the nation's chief theatrical figures of the early 20th century. An early independent breakaway from the Theatrical Syndicate, he championed American plays and playwrights.

Paul Allen, an acquaintance of Miller's, joined Harry Ingalls as architect of the theater. Ingalls, with his partner F.B. Hoffman, had designed a number of handsome, intimate theaters in New York, including Winthrop Ames's Little Theater on West 44th Street and the Neighborhood Playhouse on the Lower East Side.

The Henry Miller Theater, as Henry Miller's own Broadway theater, represents a special and important aspect of the nation's theatrical history. Beyond its historical importance, its facade is an excellent example of the elegant neo-Georgian style popular for intimate theaters designed early in the century.

For over half a century, beginning with Henry Miller's productions, the Henry Miller Theater 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.¹

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.² 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, the combination system soon killed off the majority of stock companies.³ By 1904 there were some 420 combination companies touring through thousands of theaters in cities and towns across the country.⁴

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.⁵

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."⁶ 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."⁷ 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.⁸

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.⁹ 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.¹⁰

(MMK)

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.¹¹

The Henry Miller Theater, as one of the Broadway theaters 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.

Henry Miller

Henry Miller built his theater in 1918 at the pinnacle of a long and prolific stage career. As producer, director, actor and manager, Miller had attained a high reputation among the theater greats of his day. George M. Cohan said of him, "His love for the theater was a religious ideal."¹

Born in 1860 in London, England, Miller moved to Toronto, Canada, with his parents when he was twelve years old and there began to pursue an acting career in 1878.² In the following years he appeared with many of the great actors and actresses of the day, first in Canada and Boston, then in New York City. On the road he enjoyed the reputation of an accomplished Shakespearean actor; his repertory included Twelfth Night, As You Like It, Measure for Measure, and Cymbeline. His first great success, however, came in 1893 when he joined the stock company of the Empire Theater (Broadway at 39th Street; demolished). As its leading man, the versatile Miller shone in production after production. By the turn of the century he had become one of the premier stars of Broadway, from comedy to tragedy.

Not content with just this facet of the theater profession, Miller turned to writing plays in 1906, co-authoring Zira with J. Hartley Manners. That same year he also became a producer, renting the Princess Theater (104

West 29th Street; demolished). He struck a deal with Lee Shubert, at a time when the Shuberts were among the "Independents" fighting the monopolistic grip on the theater world of the infamous Theatrical Syndicate. The Shuberts provided Miller with one-third of the necessary capital, in exchange for a guarantee of out-of-town booking rights.³

It was at the Princess that Miller produced and starred in perhaps the greatest success of his career, William Vaughan Moody's The Great Divide. In the succeeding years he continued producing and acting in such well received plays as Her Husband's Wife, The Rainbow, Daddy Long Legs, and The Changelings.

It was as a producer that Miller achieved his greatest fame:

...he broke from the Theatrical Syndicate when it was dangerous to do so and produced "The Great Divide," a play which blazed the trail in native drama, he vastly raised the standards of production in our theater less by attention to externals than to a true and beautiful rendering of the play's essential meaning....⁴

Although Miller remained a British subject all his life, he devoted his energies almost exclusively to American drama:

As a director and producer, Henry Miller did more for American authors than any man who ever touched our theatre. From the time he left Charles Frohman's management and became his own manager he produced a steady succession of plays of American authorship.... my list includes Richard Harding Davis, Louis Evans Shipman, Rida Johnson Young, William Vaughan Moody, H.S. Sheldon....⁵

Miller had long wanted to build his own playhouse and when the opportunity finally came in 1916, his vision of an ideal theater, a national "temple" of drama, as he called it, became a major news event in theater circles.⁶ With this lifelong dream fulfilled, Miller spent most of his energies producing and directing until his death from pneumonia in 1926.

(PD, AR)

Notes

1. Introduction by George M. Cohan to Frank P. Morse, Backstage with Henry Miller (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1938), p. 9.
2. Much of the below is based on Henry Miller, obituary, New York Times, April 10, 1926, p. 1.
3. Morse, pp. 15-17.

4. Walter Prichard Eaton, "Fifty Years in the U.S. Theater," a review of Frank P. Morse, Backstage with Henry Miller, unidentified clipping in the Henry Miller clipping file, Billy Rose Theater Collection, Lincoln Center Branch, New York Public Library.
5. A.E. Thomas, "Henry Miller," New York Times, Nov. 18, 1926; clipping in the Henry Miller clipping file, Billy Rose Theater Collection.
6. "Henry Miller Builds a Theater," New York Times, March 3, 1918, sec. 5, p. 11.

Allen, Ingalls & Hoffman

To design his dream theater, Henry Miller turned to Ingalls & Hoffman, an architectural firm which had risen to prominence in the world of theater design five years earlier with the commission for Winthrop Ames's Little Theater on West 44th Street. The firm was joined by independent architect Paul Allen, specially brought in on the project by Henry Miller.

Francis Burrall Hoffman, Jr. (1882-1980) and Harry Creighton Ingalls (1876-1936) both studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Ingalls had previously been at M.I.T. Hoffman, born in New Orleans, graduated from Harvard in 1903, and from the Ecole in 1907.¹ Following his return to New York, Hoffman joined the prestigious firm of Carrere & Hastings, and worked on the design of the New Theater which producer Winthrop Ames had directed from 1909 until its closing. When, in 1910, Hoffman left Carrere & Hastings to form a partnership with Ingalls, Ames approached him with the idea for a small theater. The producer was impressed with Hoffman's work, but also recognized that a newly formed firm would charge smaller fees and keep costs down for his first venture. The resulting Little Theater was an elegant, neo-Georgian brick-faced building, whose residential air suggested the intimacy of the little theater within.

The success of the Little Theater led to further theater designs for the firm, including the Neighborhood Playhouse (now the Henry Street Settlement Playhouse) at 466-470 Grand Street (1913), a design very similar to the Little, erected for the encouragement of drama among neighborhood people; the Henry Miller Theater (1917-18, in collaboration with Paul Allen) at 124-130 West 43rd Street; the Renaissance Casino and Theater (1921-22, Ingalls alone) at 2341-2357 Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard; and the Plaza Theater (1929, Ingalls alone), a small movie theater at 42 East 58th Street.

Ingalls & Hoffman's most dramatic and famous commission came shortly after their completion of the Little Theater. John Deering, the co-founder of the International Harvester Company, had hired Paul Chatlin, an interior decorator, to help design a large villa near Miami that would house Deering's vast art collection. Chatlin, however, had little architectural training, and advised Deering to turn to the young Hoffman and his partner. The Villa Vizcaya, designed primarily by Hoffman, was a romantic composition based on Mediterranean motifs. Four distinct facades surrounding a central court each incorporated elements corresponding to the

widely divergent periods and styles of art and architectural artifacts in Deering's collection. Upon its completion in 1916, the building, along with the architects and the client, attracted world-wide notice.²

Besides Villa Vizcaya and their theater commissions, both Ingalls and Hoffman, working independently, designed a number of residences. Their large estates and townhouses of the decade immediately following the Little Theater are particularly interesting for their style, the same sedate but elegant neo-Georgian that was so popular in that era for residential work but quite unusual for a theater. Both Ingalls and Hoffman designed Long Island estates,³ and Hoffman did a number of New York townhouses; his neo-Georgian style house at 17 East 90th Street (1919) is a designated New York City Landmark. He also worked in Miami, after the success of Villa Vizcaya, and in Paris.

Paul Allen's career as an architect is less well documented. He was born in Boston in 1876, the son of the well-known actor, C. Leslie Allen. His only documented works besides the Miller Theater were Henry Miller's home (1915) in upstate New York, and the George Hill residence (1918) in Stamford, Connecticut. His involvement in the theater commission stemmed from his personal connections with Miller -- he was the brother of Viola Allen, Miller's leading lady in the early years of the Empire company and later in some of Miller's independent productions including The Great Divide of 1906. According to several accounts, Viola Allen introduced the two men backstage after a performance of The Great Divide; Miller, upon learning of Paul Allen's profession, was said to have exclaimed: "Someday I'm going to have my own theater in New York and when I do I'm going to let you build it for me!"⁴

Ingalls died in 1936, but Hoffman lived until 1980. Among his last works was the 1966 addition to Gracie Mansion.

(PD)

Notes

1. Harry Creighton Ingalls, obituary, New York Times, July 12, 1936, sec. 2, p. 6; Francis B. Hoffman, obituary, New York Times, November 28, 1980, sec. 2, p. 12.
2. An entire issue of the Architectural Review was devoted to Vizcaya. See "Vizcaya, the Villa and Grounds," Architectural Review 8 (July 1917), 120-167.
3. A striking house in Southampton by Hoffman is illustrated in The Brickbuilder 23 (Feb 1914), plates 26-28.
4. Wilella Waldorf, "Henry Miller's Theatre Twenty Years Old Today," New York Post, April 1, 1938.

The Henry Miller Theater

Henry Miller, as actor and producer, had long thought about an ideal theater. In a 1910 review of the recently opened New Theater on Central Park West, he laid out both his criticisms of the enormous and opulent new house, better fitted in his view for grand opera than American drama, and his ideal of what American theaters could be.¹

Miller's two complaints about the New Theater became the basis for his thoughts on the ideal theater. The New Theater was a very large, opulently adorned house, subsidized by prominent wealthy New Yorkers who complained about the "commercial" quality of Broadway productions. To Miller, both the size and the emphasis on high-paying wealthy patrons were wrongheaded. On size, he wrote:

You cannot bring about that close harmony of actor, author and audience without which illusion is impossible, especially in the modern drama, in an auditorium so large that, for the bulk of the spectators, intimate touch with the stage is impossible.²

On high-paying patrons:

The private box is artistically criminal; it creates a distinction repugnant to an audience, and a distraction fatal to that concentrated attention upon the stage required of its auditors by the drama.... You have got...to hit square at the heart and mind of the people; you have got to convince them that what you are doing is really done for their good, and for the good of the theater as an institution. And you cannot do that, although you build ever so magnificent a temple, when you present drama at prices beyond the reach of those who most need it -- of those, at any rate, most ardent for it.³

Miller described his own ideal as

a real American theatre for the real American people, conducted on real American principles. Since a very large majority of the real American people cannot afford to pay two dollars a seat for their theatrical entertainment, the prices in my theater would range from fifty cents down to ten.⁴

He envisioned three companies in three theaters in New York City, one specializing in tragedy, one in comedy, and one "for what is known as the modern drama, the naturalistic picture of contemporary life."⁵

According to one source, the impetus to build the actual Henry Miller Theater came not from Miller himself but from a real-estate firm. William A. White & Sons knew of a site on West 43rd Street that seemed ripe for redevelopment, and proposed building a theater there to Lodewick Vroom, Miller's general manager.⁶ Vroom in turn convinced Miller that with theaters such as the George M. Cohan, the David Belasco, and the Sam Harris already named after prominent stage figures, it was time for Miller to

include himself on the list. (Another source has the story that Miller asked Vroom to find him a spot for a theater, and Vroom found White & Sons and convinced them of the value of the idea.⁷) In 1916, despite high real estate prices and the economic repercussions of the First World War, Miller decided to proceed, financing a major portion of the project himself. He brought in Allen and Ingalls, whom he had earlier hired to design his country residence in Connecticut, and had them incorporate many of his own specific ideas into the design.

Miller abandoned his earlier intentions of doing away with boxes altogether, instead simply making them less obtrusive than in older theaters. He did, however, insist on including a second balcony for inexpensive seating. Although most earlier theaters had second balconies, they fell out of favor in the 'teens, "a result, perhaps," according to a contemporary source,

of the competition of the movie houses.... Mr. Miller has a tender memory of his own lofty beginnings as a playgoer, and a desire which is as wise as it is generous to include in his audience the youthful and those of humble means.⁸

Such second balconies were also unusual in small theaters; according to another source,

How these three tiers have been worked in here is, to a certain extent, an architectural feat; but it has been done apparently with no sacrifice either of convenience or comfort.⁹

Despite Miller's ideal of an "American theatre," his architects turned to strictly English sources for the design of the new building. Its exterior is a very sedate neo-Georgian composition, and its interior is adorned with Adamesque plaster detailing. While not unique in style, the Miller belonged to a minority tradition among contemporary Broadway theaters, most of which sported Beaux-Arts classic style facades. David Belasco's Stuyvesant Theater (1906) just one block north on 44th Street had been designed in the formal neo-Georgian manner. Winthrop Ames's Little Theatre (1911), a block west of the Stuyvesant, also used the style, though in this case a variant meant to suggest the domesticity of Colonial Revival houses. Ingalls & Hoffman, not coincidentally, designed the Little as well as the Miller. Both the Stuyvesant and the Little were meant to evoke "intimate" associations, as though Belasco or Ames had invited theatergoers into a drawing-room; Miller's theater was also of the intimate variety.

The neo-Georgian also carried connotations of the English drama from which Americans considered their theater to be descended. A writer in a contemporary architectural periodical described the Henry Miller's style as

...recreating all the charm and polish of that mid-eighteenth century whose life and manners bore so great a similarity to our own.

After discussing the history of English drama, he wrote that,

Enough of the inspiration of Drury Lane has been breathed into Henry Miller's theatre to mark it as a lineal descendant in English tradition. The exterior has preserved largely the Georgian character...the scale tending toward the domestic rather than the monumental, and the whole reminiscent of the Adam work contemporary with the Adelphi development and their remodeling of the theatre in Drury Lane.

More specifically, the Miller's antecedents were traced to two English types:

In general one might say that the Adam influence has confined itself to the larger aspects of the facade, the use and treatment of the pedimented end motifs, the proportioning of the main order, the slight reveal and the restraint of the decoration. In other respects and details the spirit is of a slightly earlier type, the central doorway and the arched windows recalling the earlier English Georgian architecture which formed the point of departure for much of our American colonial work.¹⁰

The Georgian elements of the facade include "Persian red" brick walls, laid in Flemish bond, and doors, windows, cornice and pediments trimmed with white terra cotta. The windows at the second and third stories were considered unusual at the time because windows had not usually been incorporated into the street facades of other theaters; they were, however, part of the Georgian style, and other neo-Georgian theaters (the Little and the Belasco) did have them. Another unusual aspect of the theater's design resulted from the Henry Miller being the first theater erected under new zoning laws. Where prior theaters had been required to maintain open alleys at either side, the Miller was able to mask the alleys by extending its facade to either side.¹¹

Critical reaction to Miller's new theater was positive. According to the New York Times, the opening of the theater "means that one of the sturdiest figures in the history of the American stage has founded an institution of his own."¹² The architectural press was particularly impressed with the new building, which

stands out from the writhing and contorted mass of its commercially designed confreres...

The theatre as a whole stands as a monument, first, to the debt which we owe to our mother country for her traditions in the arts; second, to the public whose appreciation in general has risen to such a plane that a theatre of so subtle an atmosphere should rise to meet its demand; and last, but by no means least, to the architects...¹³

After Miller's death in 1926, his son Gilbert Miller continued managing the theater and producing plays, although actual ownership of the theater had been turned over to Abraham L. Erlanger shortly before Henry Miller's death. Today, despite conversion for use as a discotheque, with

the exception of a new marquee added in 1966 and new doors, the exterior of the theater remains essentially unchanged from the day it was built.

(PD, AR)

Notes

1. Henry Miller, "The New Theater and the True," Saturday Evening Post, January 29, 1910; clipping from the Robinson Locke collection of dramatic scrapbooks, series 2, vol. 278, pp. 150-152; Billy Rose Theater Collection, Lincoln Center Branch, New York Public Library.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Wilella Waldorf, "Henry Miller's Theater Twenty Years Ago Today," New York Post, April 1, 1938.
7. Frank P. Morse, Backstage with Henry Miller (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1938), pp. 221-222.
8. New York Times, cited in Wilella Waldorf.
9. "Henry Miller Builds a Theater," New York Times, March 3, 1918, sec. 5, p. 11.
10. Charles Over Cornelius, "The Henry Miller Theater New York City," Architectural Record, 44 (August 1918), 113-115.
11. Cornelius, p. 115.
12. "Henry Miller Builds a Theater."
13. Cornelius, pp. 113, 124.

The Henry Miller Theater as a Playhouse¹

Henry Miller officially opened his theater on April 1, 1918, with a production of The Fountain of Youth, in which he also starred. He was to appear in seven more productions at his theater prior to his death in 1926, including such hits as The Famous Mrs. Fair (1918) and The Changelings (1923). Other notable productions from this period include La, La, Lucille, the first show with a complete score by George Gershwin (1917), and The Vortex (1925), Noel Coward's triumphant American debut.² Later in the 1920s Ina Claire and Constance Collier starred in a popular revival of Somerset Maughan's Our Betters (1928) and Colin Keith Johnson appeared in the moving war drama Journey's End (1929) which proved to be an unexpected commercial success playing 485 performances.

During the early 1930s the Henry Miller featured such notable productions as Philip Barry's Tomorrow and Tomorrow (206 performances), Molnar's The Good Fairy with Helen Hayes and Walter Connolly (154 performances), and Sidney Howard's adaptation of Fauchois' The Late Christopher Bean with Pauline Lord (221 performances). Eugene O'Neill's last play, Days Without End, appeared here in 1934, and in 1936 the Theater Guild took over the house for a production of The Country Wife with Ruth Gordon. Thornton Wilder's Our Town opened at the Miller in 1938 but soon moved to the Morosco to make way for Freddy Lonsdale's Once Is Enough with Ina Claire.

The 1940s saw a number of distinguished performances by leading actresses including Flora Robson and Estelle Winwood in Ladies in Retirement (1940, 151 performances), Grace George in Spring Again (1941, 241 performances), Gwen Anderson in Janie (1942, 321 performances), and Helen Hayes in Harriet (1943, 377 performances). Norman Krasna's comedy Dear Ruth with Lenore Lonergan and Howard Smith also scored a major hit in the 1940s, playing the Miller 683 performances. In 1948 Garson Kanin's comic masterpiece, Born Yesterday, transferred from the Lyceum going on to play until 1950. It was followed by T.S. Eliot's The Cocktail Party with Cathleen Nesbitt, Alec Guinness and Irene Worth. The Moon Is Blue with Barbara Bel Geddes, Barry Nelson and Donald Cook also proved to be a huge hit running 924 performances.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the theater continued to present consistently well-received productions. Among the most popular of these in terms of number of performances (644) was certainly Agatha Christie's Witness for the Prosecution, which ran from 1954 to 1956. Dylan Thomas's Under Milkwood (1957) and Saul Levitt's The Andersonville Trial (1959) were both critical successes, and Enter Laughing, based on an autobiographical novel by Carl Reiner, had a long run, playing 419 performances in 1963-64.

The Henry Miller Theater was taken over in 1969 by the Avon Theater chain and until 1977 operated as a movie house. The Durst Corporation then bought the playhouse, which housed first the the discotheque "Xenon," and more recently the club "Shout."

(GH, PD)

Notes

1. This production history of the Henry Miller 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 Encyclopaedia & 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).

2. Coward considered himself "fortunate in getting the Henry Miller Theatre...one of the nicest in New York and perfect both in size and atmosphere for the play." Noel Coward, Present Indicative (New York: Doubleday, 1937), p. 219.

Description¹

The Henry Miller Theater has a symmetrically-organized neo-Georgian facade which is wider than it is high. The ground floor base is of brick, now painted cream, above a granite water table. Five central pairs of metal doors are placed within deep paneled reveals, each above a granite step. The lintel of each doorway is of Adamesque inspiration with a central panel with an urn motif and end panels of elongated rosettes. The center door also has an arched broken pediment and wrought-iron railings flanking the entrance step. A canvas-covered canopy suspended from metal tie rods shelters the three center doors. The end bays at the ground floor contain large segmental-arched openings with paneled keystones and recessed doors, covered by wrought-iron grilles. Original wrought-iron and glass lanterns flank these doorways. The major portion of the facade, rising from the base, is faced with red brick laid up in Flemish bond and is organized into a five-bay center section with flanking pavilions. Double-height pilasters of brick are set on painted terra-cotta bases, have stylized Corinthian capitals of terra cotta, and flank the five bays. At the second story each bay contains a square-headed window opening with brick voussoirs and stone keystone. The sash are eight-over-eight double-hung. Elegant wrought-iron balustrades shield the windows and link the bases of the columns. At the third story arched openings have brick voussoirs, and terra-cotta impost blocks, keystones, and sills. Only the three center openings have window sash -- multi-paned, double-hung; the other two openings are blind. Brick pilasters flank the end pavilions. At the second story level, recessed arched niches of brick but with terra-cotta keystones and imposts blocks, contain Adamesque style terra-cotta urns. Terra-cotta roundels with figures portraying music and drama are placed on the wall above the niches. A wide terra-cotta frieze, adorned with urns and rosettes, contains the inscription "HENRY MILLER'S THEATRE" and spans the facade. Terra-cotta pediments above the end bays intersect with the paneled brick and terra-cotta parapet at the roofline. At the center bay a flagpole extends from the parapet.

(MP)

Notes

1. Architecturally significant features are underlined.

Conclusion

The Henry Miller Theater survives today as one of the historic playhouses that symbolize American theater for both New York and the nation. Built in 1917 to house the productions of Henry Miller, in accordance with his theatrical ideals, it helped shape the character of the Broadway theater district. Designed for Miller by Allen, Ingalls and Hoffman, the Henry Miller Theater represents a special and important aspect of the nation's theatrical history. Its exterior is a handsome example of the neo-Georgian style as seen in those Broadway theaters which wished to convey the sense of intimate theater.

For half a century, beginning with Henry Miller's own productions, the Henry Miller Theater 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) and Peter Donhauser (PD). Gale Harris (GH) of the Research Department expanded the research, verified the citations and sources, and provided editorial assistance. Marjorie Pearson (MP), Director of Research, wrote the description. Other 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 building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Henry Miller Theater 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.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Henry Miller Theater survives today as one of the historic playhouses that symbolize American theater for both New York and the nation; that it was designed for producer and director Henry Miller, one of the principal figures in American theater in the early decades of this century; that the facade designed for Miller by Allen, Ingalls & Hoffman was an elegant manifestation of Miller's theatrical theories, and as such represents a special aspect of the nation's theatrical history; that this facade is a handsome brick and terra-cotta neo-Georgian design featuring a classical colonnade supporting a handsome terra-cotta entablature; that for half a century, beginning with Miller's own productions, the Henry Miller Theater 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 a Landmark the Henry Miller Theater, 124-130 West 43rd Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 995, Lot 45, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.

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APPENDIX

The following production history of the Henry Miller's 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 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); Play Statistics File, Billy Rose Theater Collection, Lincoln Center Branch, New York Public Library; Programmes, Billy Rose Theater Collection, Lincoln Center Branch, New York Public Library.

1918

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH 4/1/18 (32 perfs.) by Louis Evan Shipman; with Henry Miller.

A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE 5/1/18 (53 perfs.) by Sydney Grundy; with Henry Miller and Billie Burke.

PERKINS 10/22/18 (23 perfs.) by Douglas Murray; with Henry Miller, Ruth Chatterton, Frank and Lillian Kemble Cooper.

DADDY LONG-LEGS 11/16/18 (17 perfs.) by Jean Webster; with Henry Miller, Ruth Chatterton and Charles Trowbridge.

BACK TO EARTH 12/13/18 (16 perfs.) by William LeBaron; with Charles Cherry, Harold Hendee and Minna Gombel.

1919

TILLIE 1/6/19 (32 perfs.) by Helen R. Martin and Frank Howe, Jr.; with Patricia Collinge, Maude Granger and Mildred Booth.

MIS' NELLY OF N'ORLEANS 2/14/19 (127 perfs.) by Laurence Eyer; with Mrs. Fiske and Frederic Burt.

LA, LA, LUCILLE 5/26/19 (104 perfs.) by Fred Jackson, lyrics by Arthur J. Jackson, music by George Gershwin; with Jack Hazzard and J. Clarence Harvey.

LUSMORE 9/19/19 (23 perfs.) by Rita Olcott and Grace Heyer; with Eva Le Gallienne and Grace Heyer.

MOONLIGHT AND HONEYSUCKLE 9/29/19 (97 perfs.) by George Scarborough; with Ruth Chatterton, Charles Trowbridge and Sydney Booth.

THE FAMOUS MRS. FAIR 12/22/19 (343 perfs.) by James Forbes; with Blanche Bates, Henry Miller, Margalo Gillmore and Kathleen Comegys.

1920

JUST SUPPOSE 11/1/20 (88 perfs.) by A.E. Thomas; with George Pauncefort, Lawrence Eddinger, Leslie Howard and Patricia Collinge.

1921

WAKE UP, JONATHAN 1/17/21 (105 perfs.) by Hatcher Hughes and Elmer L. Rice; with Mrs. Fiske, Charles Dalton, Helen Holt, Donald Cameron and Howard Lang.

THE SCARLET MAN 8/22/21 (16 perfs.) by William LeBaron; with William Morris, Beatrice Tremaine and Olive May.

THE WHITE-HEADED BOY 9/15/21 (62 perfs.) by Lennox Robinson; with Maureen Delany, Arthur Shields, Arthur Sinclair and Maire O'Neill.

THE INTIMATE STRANGERS 11/7/21 (91 perfs.) by Booth Tarkington; with Alfred Lunt, Billie Burke, Frances Howard and Glenn Hunter.

1922

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM 1/23/22 (114 perfs.) by J. Hartley Manners; with Laurette Taylor, Ralph Morgan and Frank M. Thomas.

A PINCH HITTER 6/1/22 (28 perfs.) by H.M. Harwood; with Allan Pollock and Pamela Gaythorne.

THE AWFUL TRUTH 9/18/22 (146 perfs.) by Arthur Richman; with Ina Claire, Bruce McRae, Paul Harvey and Cora Witherspoon.

1923

ROMEO AND JULIET 1/24/23 (161 perfs.) by William Shakespeare; with Rollo Peters, Jane Cowl and Dennis King.

THE CHANGELINGS 9/17/23 (139 perfs.) by Lee Wilson Dodd; with Henry Miller, Ruth Chatterton, Blanche Bates, Laura Hope Crews and Reginald Mason.

1924

MERRY WIVES OF GOTHAM 1/16/24 (96 perfs.) (a/k/a/ FANSHASTICS) by Lawrence Eyre; with Grace George, Mary Ellis, Laura Hope Crews and Judith Voselli.

HELENA'S BOYS 4/7/24 (40 perfs.) by Ida Lublenski; with Mrs. Fiske, Gay Pendleton and Reggie Sheffield.

SO THIS IS POLITICS (Strange Bedfellows) 6/16/24 (144 perfs.) by Barry Connors; with Marjorie Gateson, William C. Courtleigh and Glenn Anders.

L'AIGLON 10/20/24 (8 perfs.) by Edmond Rostand; with Mme. Simone.

NAKED 10/27/24 (8 perfs.) by Pirandello; with Mme. Simone.

MADAME SANS GENE 11/13/24 (24 perfs.,) by Sardou; with Mme. Simone.

LA PARISIENNE/UN CAPRICE 11/24/24 (8 perfs.) by Sardou; with Mme. Simone.

THE MAN IN EVENING CLOTHES 12/5/24 (11 perfs.) by Andre Picard and Yves Mirande; with Henry Miller and Marjorie Wood.

QUARANTINE 12/16/24 (163 perfs.) by F. Tennyson Jesse; with Helen Hayes, Sidney Blackmer and Beryl Mercer.

1925

THE POOR NUT 4/27/25 (300 perfs.) by J.C. Nugent and Elliot Nugent; with Elliott Nugent and Norma Lee.

THE VORTEX 9/16/25 (157 perfs.) by Noel Coward; with Noel Coward, Molly Kerr, Lillian Braithwaite and Leo G. Carroll.

1926

EMBERS 2/1/26 (33 perfs.) by A.E. Thomas; with Henry Miller, Laura Hope Crews and Ilka Chase.

STILL WATERS 3/1/26 (16 perfs.) by Augustus Thomas; with Thurston Hall, Miriam Doyle and Robert Cummings.

JUST LIFE 9/14/26 (80 perfs.) by John Bowie; with Marjorie Rambeau; Norman Foster and Clyde Fillmore.

SENIORITA RAQUEL MELLER 10/25/26 (16 perfs.).

THE PLAY'S THE THING 11/3/26 (313 perfs.) by Ferenc Molnar; with Reginald Owen.

1927

THE BABY CYCLONE 9/12/27 (187 perfs.) by George Cohan; with Spencer Tracy, Nan Sunderland and William Morris.

1928

OUR BETTERS 2/20/28 (128 perfs.) by W. Somerset Maugham; with Ina Claire, Hugh Sinclair and Gordon McRae.

GENTLEMEN OF THE PRESS 8/27/28 (128 perfs.) by Ward Morehouse; with John Cromwell and Hugh O'Connell.

THE SACRED FLAME 11/19/28 (24 perfs.) by Somerset Maugham; with Robert Harris and Mary Jerrold.

THE LADY OF THE ORCHIDS 12/13/28 (20 perfs.) by E. Ray Goetz from the French of Jecques Natanson.

1929

MERRY ANDREW 1/21/29 (24 perfs.) by Lewis Beach; with Walter Connolly.

JOURNEY'S END 3/22/29 (485 perfs.) by R.C. Sherriff; with Colin Keith-Johnson, Derek Williams and Leon Quartermaine.

1930

ONE, TWO, THREE/THE VIOLET 9/29/30 (40 perfs.) by Ferenc Molner; with Arthur Byron, Audray Dale and Ruth Gordon.

MARSEILLES 11/17/30 (16 perfs.) by Marcel Pagnol, adapted by Sidney Howard; with Alexander Kirkland and Guy Kibbee.

1931

TOMORROW AND TOMORROW 1/13/31 (206 perfs.) by Philip Barry; with Zita Johann, Harvey Stephens, and Herbert Marshall.

THE SEX FABLE 10/20/31 (33 perfs.) by Edouard Bourdet; with Helen Hayes and Mary Chippendale.

THE GOOD FAIRY 11/24/31 (154 perfs.) by Ferenc Molnar; with Helen Hayes, Walter Connolly, Evelyn Roberts, Paul McGrath and Ruth Hammond.

1932

THE LATE CHRISTOPHER BEAN 10/31/32 (221 perfs.) by Sidney Howard from the french of Rene Fauchois; with Pauline Lord, Walter Connolly, and Clarence Derwent.

1933

AMOURETTE 9/27/33 (21 perfs.) by Clare Kummer; with Mildred Natwick, Byron McGrath and Francesca Bruning.

SPRING IN AUTUMN 10/24/33 (41 perfs.) by Blanche Yurka and Nene Belmonte from the Spanish by Gregorio Martinez Sierra; with Blanche Yurka, Richard Hale, Helen Walpole and Mildred Natwick.

ALL GOOD AMERICANS 12/5/33 (39 perfs.) by Laura and S.J. Perelman; with Hope Williams, Fred Keating, Fred Dressler, and Janet McLeay.

1934

DAYS WITHOUT END 1/8/34 (57 perfs.) by Eugene O'Neill; with Earle Larimore, Ilka Chase, Frederick Forrester and Selena Royle.

HOUSE OF REMSEN 4/2/34 (34 perfs.) by Nicholas Soussanin, William J. Perlman and Marie Baumer; with James Kirkwood, Francesca Bruning and Karl Swensen.

THESE TWO 5/7/34 (8 perfs.) by Lionel Hale; with A.E. Matthews and Helen Chandler.

THE BRIDGE OF TOROZKO 9/13/34 (12 PERFS.) by Otto Indig; with Van Heflin, Sam Jaffe, Lionel Stander and Genevieve Belasco.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE 10/17/34 (501 perfs.) by Lawrence Riley; with Gladys George and Franklin Crawford.

1935

LIBEL 12/21/35 (156 perfs.) by Edward Wooll; with Colin Clive, Joan Marion and Wilfred Lawson.

1936

SEEN BUT NOT HEARD 9/17/36 (60 perfs.) by Marie Baumer and Martin Berkeley; with Anne Baxter and Paul McGrath.

THE COUNTRY WIFE 12/1/36 (88 perfs.) by William Wycherley; with Percy Waram, Ruth Gordon, Anthony Quayle, Irene Browne, Helena Pickard and Roger Livesay.

1937

NOW YOU'VE DONE IT 3/5/37 (43 perfs.) by Mary Coyle Chase; with Barbara Robbins and Walter Greaza.

MISS QUIS 4/7/37 (37 perfs.) by Ward Morehouse; with Peggy Wood, Jessie Royce Landis, Eda Heinemann and James Rennie.

FRENCH WITHOUT TEARS 9/28/37 (111 perfs.) by Terence Rattigan; with Frank Lawton and Penelope Dudley Ward.

1938

TORTILLA FLAT 1/12/38 (5 perfs.) by Jack Kirkland from a novel by John Steinbeck; with Edward Woods, Eddle Craven and Erin O'Brien-Moore.

OUR TOWN 2/4/38 (336 total perfs.) by Thornton Wilder; with Frank Craven, Helen Carew, Jay Fassett, Chares Wiley, Jr. and Billy Redfield. (Moved to the Morosco 2/15/38).

ONCE IS ENOUGH 2/15/38 (105 perfs.) by Frederick Lonsdale; with Ina Claire, Hugh Williams and Viola Keats.

KISS THE BOYS GOOD-BYE 9/28/38 (286 perfs.) by Clare Boothe; with Millard Mitchell, Helen Claire, Frank Wilson, Sheldon Leonard and Benay Venuta.

1939

PASTORAL 11/1/39 (14 perfs.) by Victor Wolfson; with Ruth Weston and John Banner.

RING TWO 11/22/39 (5 perfs.) by Gladys Hurlbut; with June Walker, William Sweetland and Gene Tierney.

CHRISTMAS EVE 12/27/39 (6 perfs.) by Gustav Eckstein; with Katherine Locke, Kent Smith, Sidney Lumet and Mildred Natwick.

1940

GENEVA 1/30/40 (15 perfs.) by George Bernard Shaw; with Norah Howard and Jessica Tandy.

LADIES IN RETIREMENT 3/26/40 (151 perfs.) by Reginald Denham and Edward Percy; with Flora Robson, Isobel Elsom, Estelle Winwood and Jessamine Newcombe.

DELICATE STORY 12/4/40 (29 perfs.) by Ferenc Molnar; with Edna Best, John Craven and Katherine Grey.

1941

EIGHT O'CLOCK TUESDAY 1/6/41 (16 perfs.) by Robert Wallsten and Mignon G. Eberhart; with McKay Morris, Cecil Humphreys and Celeste Holm.

THE TALLEY METHOD 2/24/41 (56 perfs.) by S.N. Behrman; with Claire Niesen and Ina Claire.

THE HAPPY DAYS 5/13/41 (23 perfs.) by Zoe Akins; with Diana Barrymore and Joan Tetzl.

VILLAGE GREEN 9/3/41 (30 perfs.) by Carl Allensworth; with Frank Craven, John Craven, Frank Wilcox and Laura Pierpont.

SPRING AGAIN 11/10/41 (241 perfs.) by Isabel Leighton and Bertram Bloch;
with Grace George, C. Aubrey Smith, John Craven and Joseph Buloff.

1942

ALL IN FAVOR 1/20/42 (7 perfs.) by Louis Hoffman and Don Hartman; with
Raymond Roe, Frances Heflin, J.C. Nugent and Arnold Stang.

HEART OF A CITY 2/12/42 (28 perfs.) by Lesley Storm; with Gertrude
Musgrove, Terry Fay, Romney Brent, Cora Smith and Robert Whitehead.

BROKEN JOURNEY 6/23/42 (23 perfs.) by Andrew Rosenthal; with Edith
Atwater, Warner Anderson and Helen Carew.

JANIE 9/10/42 (321 perfs.) by Josephine Benthem and Herschel Williams;
with Gwen Anderson, Herbert Evers.

FLARE PATH 12/23/42 (14 perfs.) by Terence Rattigan; with Alec Guinness
and Nancy Kelly.

1943

HARRIET 3/3/43 (377 perfs.) by Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements; with
Helen Hayes, Jane Seymour, Helen Carew, Joan Tetzels and Jack Manning.

1944

CHICKEN EVERY SUNDAY 4/5/44 (317 perfs.) by Julius J. and Philip G.
Epstein; with Mary Philips, Guy Stockwell, Hope Emerson and Rhys
Williams. (Moved to the Plymouth Theater 6/14/44.)

FOR KEEPS 6/14/44 (29 perfs.) by F. Hugh Herbert; with Patricia Kirkland,
Julie Warren and Frank Conroy.

THE VISITOR 10/17/44 (23 perfs.) by Kenneth White; with Richard Hylton and
Frances Carson.

THE STREETS ARE GUARDED 11/20/44 (24 perfs.) by Laurence Stallings; with
Jack Manning.

DEAR RUTH 12/13/44 (683 perfs.) by Norman Krasna; with Phyllis Povah,
Lenore Lonergan, Howard Smith, John Dall and Virginia Gilmore.

1946

MADE IN HEAVEN! 10/24/46 (92 perfs.) by Hagar Wilde; with Donald Cook,
Carmen Mathews and Jane Middleton.

1947

LITTLE A 1/15/47 (21 perfs.) by Hugh White; with Otto Kruger and Robert Willey.

THE STORY OF MARY SURRATT 2/8/47 (11 perfs.) by John Patrick; with Dorothy Gish.

MAURICE CHEVALIER 3/10/47 (46 perfs.)

FOR LOVE OR MONEY 11/4/47 (263 perfs.) by F. Hugh Herbert; with John Loder and June Lockhart.

1948

GRANDMA'S DIARY 9/22/48 (6 perfs.) by Albert Wineman Barker.

BORN YESTERDAY 11/7/48 (1,642 total perfs.) by Garson Kanin; with Judy Holliday, Gary Merrill, and Paul Douglas. (First opened at the Lyceum Theater 2/4/46.)

1950

THE COCKTAIL PARTY 1/21/50 (409 perfs.) by T.S. Eliot; with Cathleen Nesbitt, Irene Worth, Alec Guinness and Eileen Peel.

1951

THE MOON IS BLUE 3/8/51 (924 perfs.) by F. Hugh Herbert; with Barbara Bel Geddes, Barry Nelson, Donald Cook and Ralph Dunn.

1953

THE TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL 11/3/53 (39 perfs.) by Horton Foote; with Lillian Gish, Jo Van Fleet, Eva Marie Saint and Salem Ludwig.

OH MEN! OH WOMEN! 12/17/53 (382 perfs.) by Edward Chodorov; with Franchot Tone, Larry Blyden, Betsy von Furstenberg, Anne Jackson and Gig Young.

1954

THE LIVING ROOM 11/17/54 (22 perfs.) by Graham Greene; with Barbara Bel Geddes and Hazel Jones.

WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION 12/16/54 (645 perfs.) by Agatha Christie; with Patricia Jessel, Gene Lyons, Ralph Roberts and Una O'Connor.

1956

THE RELUCTANT DEBUTANTE 10/10/56 (134 perfs.) by William Douglas Home; with Wilfred Hyde White, Adrienne Allen and Anne Massey.

1957

HOTEL PARADISO 4/11/57 (108 perfs.) by Georges Feydeau and Maurice Desvallieres; with Bert Lahr, Vera Pearce, Angela Lansbury, James Coco and John Emery.

UNDER MILK WOOD 10/15/57 (39 perfs.) by Dylan Thomas; with Donald Houston, Audrey Ridgwell, Pirie MacDonald, Donald Moffat and Tom Clancy.

THE GENIUS AND THE GODDESS 12/10/57 (7 perfs.) by Aldous Huxley and Beth Wendell based on a novel by Aidous Huxley; with Nancy Kelly and Alan Webb.

THE COUNTRY WIFE 12/23/57 (45 total perfs.) by William Wycherley; with Laurence Harvey, Julie Harris, Coleen Dewhurst and George Tyne. (First opened in the Adelphi Theater 11/27/57).

1958

THE ROPE DANCERS 1/27/58 (189 total perfs.) by Morton Wishengrad; with Siobhan McKenna, Joan Blondell, Art Carney, Joseph Julian and Theodore Bikel. (First opened at the Cort Theater 11/20/57.)

PATATE 10/28/58 (7 perfs.) by Marcel Achard; with Tom Ewell and Susan Oliver.

CUE FOR PASSION 11/25/58 (39 perfs.) by Elmer Rice; with Joanna Brown, Diana Wynyard, John Kerr and Robert Lansing.

1959

LOOK AFTER LULU 3/3/59 (39 perfs.) by Noel Coward; with Tammy Grimes, Kurt Kaszner, Roddy McDowall, Reva Rose, George Baker, Ellis Rabb and Jack Gilford.

THE NERVOUS SET 5/12/59 (23 perfs.) by Jay Landesman and Theodore J. Flicker, music by Tommy Wolf; with Larry Hagman, Richard Hayes, Thomas Aldredge and Tani Seitz.

AN EVENING WITH YVES MONTAND 9/22/59 (42 perfs.) (moved to Longacre Theatre 10/12/59).

THE GOLDEN FLEECING 10/15/59 (84 perfs.) by Lorenzo Semple, Jr.; with Suzanne Pleshette, Constance Ford, Mickey Deems and Red Granger.

THE ANDERSONVILLE TRIAL 12/29/59 (179 perfs.) by Saul Levitt; with George C. Scott and Herbert Berghof.

1960

THE WORLD OF CARL SANDBURG 9/14/60 (29 perfs.); with Bette Davis, Leif Erickson and Clark Allen.

UNDER THE YUM-YUM TREE 11/16/60 (173 perfs.) by Lawrence Roman; with Nan Martin, Dean Jones, Gig Young, John MacKay and Sandra Church.

1962

GREAT DAY IN THE MORNING 3/28/62 (13 perfs.) by Alice Cannon; with Colleen Dewhurst, Frances Sternhagen, Clifton James and Thomas Carlin.

THE AFFAIR 9/20/62 (116 perfs.) by Ronald Millar; with Christopher Hewett, Brenda Vaccaro, Kenneth Mars, Donald Moffat and Paxton Whitehead.

1963

THE HOLLOW CROWN 1/29/63 (46 perfs.) by John Barton; with Derek Godfrey, Dorothy Tutin and Paul Harwick.

ENTER LAUGHING 3/13/63 (419 perfs.) by Joseph Stein based on a novel by Carl Reiner; with Alan Arkin, Michael J. Pollard, Irving Jacobson, Pierre Epstein, Vivian Blaine and Sylvia Sidney.

1964

THE WHITE HOUSE 5/19/64 (23 perfs.) by A.E. Hotchner; with Helen Hayes, Fritz Weaver, James Daly and Gene Wilder.

THE COMMITTEE 9/16/64 (61 perfs.) by The Company; with Irene Riordan, Larry Hankin, Kathryn Ish, Dick Stahl and Scott Beach.

P.S. I LOVE YOU 11/19/64 (12 perfs.) by Lawrence Roman; with Geraldine Page.

THE SIGN IN SIDNEY BRUSTEIN'S WINDOW 12/29/64 (99 perfs.) by Lorraine Hansberry; with Gabriel Dell, Rita Moreno and Alice Ghostley. (First opened in the Longacre Theater 10/15/64).

1965

DIAMOND ORCHID 2/10/65 (5 perfs.) by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee; with Bruce Gordon, Jennifer West and Finlay Currie.

A RACE OF HAIRY MEN! 4/29/65 (4 perfs.) by Evan Hunter; with Brandon DeWilde.

MINOR MIRACLE 10/7/65 (4 perfs.) by Al Morgan; with Pert Kelton, Lee Tracy, Julie Bovasso and Conard Fowkes.

THE SUBJECT WAS ROSES 12/21/65 (832 total perfs.) by Frank D. Gilroy; with Chester Morris, Maureen O'Sullivan, Walter McGinn and Dustin Hoffman. (First opened at the Royale Theater 5/25/64; moved to the Belasco 3/1/66).

1966

THREE BAGS FULL 3/6/66 (33 perfs.) by Jerome Chodorov; with Nancy Marchand, Paul Ford and Jon Richards.

AGATHA SUE, I LOVE YOU 12/14/66 (5 perfs.) by Abe Einhorn; with Corbett Monica, Ray Walston, Lee Lawson, Betty Garde and Renee Taylor.

1967

THE PAISLEY CONVERTIBLE 2/11/67 (9 perfs.) by Harry Cauley; with Joyce Bulifant, Bill Bixby, Jed Allan, Marsha Hunt and Betsy von Furstenberg.

HELLO SOLLY 4/4/67 (68 perfs.); with Mickey Katz and Larry Best.

THE PROMISE 11/14/67 (23 perfs.) by Aleksei Arbuzov; with Eileen Atkins, Ian McShane and Ian McKellen.

1968

BEFORE YOU GO 1/11/68 (28 perfs.) by Lawrence Holofcener; with Marian Seldes and Gene Troobnick.

PORTRAIT OF A QUEEN 2/28/68 (60 perfs.) by William Francis; with Dorothy Tutin, Nicholas Smith and Thomas Barbour.

THE VENETIAN TWINS 5/28/68 (32 perfs.) by Carlo Goldoni; performed by the Theater of Genoa.

THE CUBAN THING 9/24/68 (1 perf.) by Jack Gelber; with Rip Torn, Jane White, Maria Tucci, Raul Julia, Conrad Bain and Harry Packwood.

MORNING, NOON AND NIGHT 11/28/68 (52 perfs.) by Israel Horovitz (Morning), Terrence McNally (Noon) and Leonard Melfi (Night); with Charlotte Rae, Robert Klein and John Heffernan.

1969

BUT SERIOUSLY... 2/27/69 (4 perfs.) by Julius J. Epstein; with Tom Poston, Harry Packwood, Richard Dreyfuss and Dick Van Patten.

1983

THE RITZ 5/2/83 (1 perf.) by Terrence McNally.



Henry Miller Theater
124-130 West 43rd Street
Manhattan

Built: 1917-18
Architect: Allen, Ingalls & Hoffman