

Landmarks Preservation Commission
January 5, 1988; Designation List 199
LP-1387

WINTER GARDEN THEATER, first floor interior consisting of the inner lobby, the auditorium, the stage; 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; 1634-1646 Broadway, Manhattan; initial structure built c. 1885 and rebuilt 1896; remodeled and partially rebuilt for theater use 1910-11, architect W. Albert Swasey; remodeled 1922-23, architect Herbert J. Krapp.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1022, Lot 26.

On June 14 and 15, 1982, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as an Interior Landmark of the Winter Garden Theater, first floor interior consisting of the outer lobby, the inner 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. 83). 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, 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 Interior of the Winter Garden Theater survives today as one of the historic theater interiors that symbolize American theater for both New York and the nation. Originally built as the American Horse Exchange, with an auction ring, it was converted for use as a theater in 1910-11, by architect W. Albert Swasey, for the Shubert family. It was remodeled in 1922-23, again for the Shuberts, by Herbert J. Krapp.

Founded by the three brothers Sam S., Lee and J.J. Shubert, the Shubert organization was the dominant shaper of New York's theater district. Beginning as producers, the brothers expanded into the building of theaters as well, and eventually helped cover the blocks east and west of Broadway in Midtown with playhouses.

W. Albert Swasey, whose reputation was first made as a residential architect in St. Louis, moved to New York in 1905. Of the four theaters he designed here for the Shuberts, only the Winter Garden survives.

Herbert J. Krapp, who designed almost all the Shuberts' post-World War I 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 Winter Garden represents a typical and important aspect of the nation's theatrical history. Beyond its historical importance, its interior has an unusual configuration reflecting its history, and particularly its initial remodeling by Swasey for a large theater designed to house lush musical revues. The theater's handsome ornament, a product of Krapp's 1923 remodeling, is an excellent example of the elegant Adamesque style in which he worked.

For three quarters of a century the Winter Garden 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.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.

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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

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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.¹¹

The interior of the Winter Garden Theater, as one of the Broadway theater interiors surviving today in the theater district, contributes to

the totality of the district's history by virtue of its participation in that history.

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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 Shuberts

Sam S. Shubert (d.1905), Lee Shubert (c.1873-1953), and Jacob J. Shubert (c.1877-1963) formed perhaps the most powerful family Broadway has ever seen. Children of an immigrant peddler from Czarist Lithuania,¹ the Shuberts rose to become the dominant force in legitimate theater in America. By 1924 they were producing 25 percent of all the plays in America,² and controlled 75 percent of the theater tickets sold in this country.

The Shuberts' career in the theater actually began in front of a theater: Lee Shubert sold newspapers outside Wieting's Opera House in Syracuse. Soon his brother Sam began to help him. The manager of Wieting's then made Lee his personal errand boy. Sam Shubert was the first in the family actually to work in a theater: soon after his brother's promotion to errand boy he was given a small role in a Belasco production at Wieting's. Belasco was to remain Sam Shubert's idol throughout his career.³

Sam Shubert was the driving force behind the family's rise in the theater industry. From a first job as program boy at the Bastable Theater in Syracuse, he moved to Syracuse's Grand Opera House as assistant treasurer (ticket seller) and then treasurer. At eighteen he returned to Wieting's Opera House as treasurer.⁴ In 1894 he assembled enough money to buy the road rights of Charles Hoyt's A Texas Steer, and took the play on a tour of inexpensive houses. The tour was a success and the next season he repeated it with Hoyt's A Stranger in New York.⁵ In 1897 the Shuberts used the money of local backers to build their own theater in Syracuse, the Baker, with Jacob Shubert serving as manager.

Their success upstate convinced the Shuberts that they were ready to enter the theater world in New York City. In 1900 Sam and Lee Shubert obtained the lease of New York City's Herald Square Theater at Broadway and 35th Street (demolished 1915), while Jacob managed their upstate business. The Herald Square Theater at that time was unpopular with theatergoers, but the Shuberts changed that with a successful production of Arizona by Augustus John. They proceeded to engage the well-known actor Richard Mansfield, and he appeared at the Herald Square in 1901 in a popular production of Monsieur Beaucaire.⁶ The success of these productions encouraged the Shuberts to expand their activities in New York City. In 1901 Sam Shubert leased the Casino Theater on 39th Street; he secured the American rights to the London hit A Chinese Honeymoon and in 1902 it opened at the Casino to rave reviews. The show ran for more than a year, and three companies presented it on the road.⁷

The Shuberts followed the success of A Chinese Honeymoon with further expansion in New York City. In 1902 they acquired the lease of the old Theater Comique on 29th Street and Broadway, remodeled the interior and reopened it as the Princess. As an opening attraction they brought Weedon Grossmith and his English company to America in their popular production of The Night of the Party. The following year, 1903, the Shuberts leased the New Waldorf Theater in London and the Madison Square Theater in New York City. They also sold a property on 42nd Street to the composer Reginald DeKoven, who built the Lyric Theater there as a home for the American School of Opera and leased it back to the Shuberts.⁸ The Shuberts then

signed a ten-year agreement with Richard Mansfield to open each season at the Lyric, to be followed by DeKoven's productions with the American School of Opera.

By this time the Shuberts were outgrowing the financial means of their upstate backers. Lee Shubert found two new financial backers, Samuel Untermyer and Andrew Freedman. Untermyer was a New York attorney with connections to many New York bankers and investors. Freedman was the owner of the New York Giants baseball team, had extensive New York real estate holdings as well as associations with the Morgan Bank, and was among the small group building New York's first subway. With the political influence and capital made available to the Shuberts by Untermyer and Freedman, they were able to expand their theater holdings in cities across the country, including Chicago, Boston, New Haven, St. Louis, and Philadelphia.

By 1905 the Shuberts controlled thirteen theaters. They had also found two additional backers who enabled the growing Shubert empire to expand still further, George B. Cox of Ohio and Joseph L. Rhinock of Kentucky. Cox was the immensely wealthy political boss of Cincinnati and Rhinock was a member of Congress who had extensive race track and real estate holdings. In May of that year, however, Sam Shubert was killed in a train wreck. He had been the driving force behind the Shubert empire, and many in the theater industry thought the Shuberts' dramatic rise would now end. Lee Shubert, however, took over his brother's role and within six months of the latter's death had quadrupled the Shubert chain and planned five memorial theaters to Sam.⁹

The Shuberts' success in acquiring and building theaters across the country and in booking and producing shows brought them into conflict with the central booking agency controlled by Marc Klaw and A.L. Erlanger. In 1905 Klaw and Erlanger's Syndicate managed most of the roughly one thousand lucrative theaters of the approximately 3000 theaters in the country.¹⁰ Every touring company had to pass through the Syndicate's stage doors. The Shuberts began to fight in earnest with Klaw and Erlanger in 1904 when they learned that their musical The Girl From Dixie wouldn't be able to get a road booking unless the brothers stopped renting their own theaters. Following his brother's death, Lee Shubert announced to the press that Harrison Fiske, David Belasco and the Shuberts were joining forces and were inviting "other independent producers" to join them in an "open door" independent circuit. The need for such a circuit was emphasized in November 1905 when Mme. Sarah Bernhardt arrived in New York for a Shubert tour. Klaw and Erlanger denied her the use of any of their theaters thinking that this action would force the Shuberts to accept their terms. The idea backfired and created enormous public support for the Shuberts as Mme. Bernhardt played in tents and town halls across the country. The struggle for control of theatrical bookings between the Shuberts and Klaw and Erlanger continued through the 1910s. By 1920, after countless lawsuits, the Shuberts gained supremacy.

In the five years following Sam Shubert's death the family continued to expand their holdings in New York City. In 1908 they hired Ben Marshall of Marshall & Fox, Chicago, to design a playhouse on West 39th Street. In what was to become a common Shubert practice, they named the theater after one of their stars, calling it Maxine Elliott's Theater (demolished). This was the first theater that the Shuberts built themselves, neither

remodeling nor leasing an existing theater. In 1909 they were involved, along with a number of other investors, in the building of the New (later Century) Theater on Central Park West at 62nd Street (demolished). At the same time they were building a second theater of their own in New York on West 41st Street, the Comedy Theater, designed by architect D.G. Malcolm (demolished). In 1910 the Shuberts hired architect W. Albert Swasey to design a small playhouse on West 39th Street, named Alla Nazimova's 39th Street Theater (demolished).

During the 'teens the Shuberts continued to expand their control of New York's theaters. Lee Shubert became the business director of the Century Theater on Central Park West. There he met Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt who owned the American Horse Exchange on Broadway at West 50th Street. The Shuberts acquired the Exchange from Vanderbilt and hired Swasey to remodel it as a theater. It opened in 1911 as the Winter Garden Theater with Jacob Shubert as manager. The Shuberts also bought the Astor Theater on Broadway and 45th Street (demolished) as well as an interest in three Manhattan theaters owned by the Selwyn brothers, and continued to build their own New York theaters. In 1913 they opened two theaters designed by Henry B. Herts, the Sam S. Shubert Memorial Theater on West 44th Street and the connecting Booth Theater (with Winthrop Ames as a partner) on West 45th Street. The Shubert Theater building also became home to the family's corporate offices.

Over the following decade the Shuberts proceeded to cover the Times Square area with Shubert theaters, all designed by architect Herbert J. Krapp, formerly of the Herts & Tallant office. In 1917 three new Shubert houses opened: the Morosco on West 45th Street (demolished), named for West Coast producer Oliver Morosco; and a second adjoining pair, the Plymouth on West 44th and the Plymouth on West 45th, just east of the Shubert-Booth pair. The Broadhurst was initially managed by playwright George Broadhurst and the Shuberts, while the Plymouth was built in partnership with producer Arthur Hopkins. In 1918 the Shuberts built the Central Theater on Broadway and 47th Street (it survives today as the Forum 47th Street movie theater).

In the 1920s the Shuberts continued their fast-paced expansion both in New York and in other cities across the country. In 1920 they acquired complete ownership of the Century Theater on Central Park West.¹¹ That same year, they announced plans for six new theaters on West 48th and 49th Streets, all to be designed by Herbert J. Krapp. Of the four of these theaters eventually built, three opened in 1921: the Ritz on West 48th Street, and the Ambassador and the Forty-Ninth Street (demolished) on West 49th. The Edwin Forrest (today called the Eugene O'Neill) on West 49th Street opened in 1925.

While the Shuberts were building and acquiring theaters for use as legitimate houses they were also involved in other aspects of the entertainment business, many of them in competition with the legitimate stage. Lee Shubert at one time owned one-third of Samuel Goldwyn's motion picture company, and later sat on the boards of both Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and United Artists.¹¹

The Shuberts also became involved in vaudeville. In 1910 in Syracuse the Shuberts had reached an agreement with B.F. Keith, who virtually

controlled vaudeville in the East. They agreed to stay out of vaudeville for ten years in return for a share in Keith's Syracuse profits.¹² With the agreement's expiration in 1920, Lee Shubert announced plans to produce vaudeville shows, making inevitable a battle with Keith's United Booking Office (UBO) and its monopoly of the eastern vaudeville circuit. The booking battle with Keith caused intense competition for stars and control of theaters. Eventually, however, it became clear that vaudeville was no competition for the growing popularity of motion pictures, and the Shuberts abandoned the enterprise.

In 1924 the Shuberts issued four million dollars worth of Shubert theater stock. The prospectus detailed the assets owned by the Shuberts, not the least of which was their control or ownership of 86 "first class" theaters in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston and 27 other major cities. The 30 theaters they owned or controlled in New York City represented half of the seating capacity on Broadway. The Shuberts owned seven of Chicago's fifteen theaters, and they booked three of the others. They went on to announce in their prospectus that the producers who booked through their organization included the Theater Guild, Winthrop Ames, Brady, Comstock, Gest, Hopkins, Sam Harris, William Morris and 40 others. Finally the Shuberts noted that 20 percent of the total time on their circuit was devoted to their own productions.¹³ The stock sold out.

In addition to the four theaters on 48th and 49th Streets announced in 1920, the Shuberts built Krapp-designed theaters throughout the Times Square area. In 1921 Jolson's 59th Street Theater opened (demolished). The Shuberts named it for Al Jolson who opened it but never appeared in it again. In 1923 they opened the Imperial Theater on West 45th Street and in 1928 the Ethel Barrymore on West 47th Street. In addition to building their own theaters, the Shuberts owned or leased at various times many other New York theaters including the Belasco, the Billy Rose (now the Nederlander), the Cort, the Forty-Fourth Street, the Harris, the Golden, the Royale and the St. James.

While the Shubert Organization continues to function today (the sole survivor among the early 20th century theater entrepreneurs), its contribution to the stock of Broadway theaters ended with the Depression. That contribution, however, was of enormous importance for the creation of the Broadway theater district, and the surviving Shubert-built theaters today bear witness to the productivity of one of the most active and influential families in American theater history.

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Notes

1. Jerry Stagg, The Brothers Shubert, (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 3.
2. Stagg, p. 217.
3. Stagg, p. 12.
4. Ibid.

5. Sam S. Shubert, obituary, New York Dramatic Mirror, May 20, 1905, p. 13.
6. Reviewed in The Theatre, January, 1902.
7. Sam S. Shubert obit., p. 13.
8. Stagg, p. 208.
9. Stagg, p. 75.
10. Stagg, p. 98.
11. Stagg, p. 165.
12. Stagg, p. 164.
13. Stagg, p. 230.

W. Albert Swasey

By the time of the Winter Garden commission, in 1910, William Albert Swasey had developed a strong reputation for theater designs. Before his Times Square debut with the Thirty-Ninth Street Theater, Swasey had built the Odeon in St. Louis, the Shubert Theater in Minneapolis, and the Steeple Chase at Coney Island. In St. Louis, he was better known for his residential buildings, in particular the houses for William K. Bixby (1892), James Green (1902) and Reid Northrop (1903).¹

Swasey (1864-1940) was born in Melbourne, Australia to American parents. Educated in Paris and at the Boston Latin School, he graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1882. Swasey worked in St. Louis for a total of twenty-three years, the first five in partnership with Charles K. Ramsey and the remainder on his own.

Swasey's Times Square achievements range from the Shuberts' small Thirty-Ninth Street Theater (1910), originally named the Alla Nazimova, to Weber and Field's Forty-Fourth Street Music Hall (1913). The latter utilized a grand classical scale to house productions on its three different levels. During Prohibition, the Forty-Fourth Street Theater housed an intimate cafe, The Little Club, in its basement. In 1912, Swasey designed, for William H. Brady, the Forty-Eighth Street Theater, where Pulitzer Prize-winner Harvey successfully ran for four years. The Winter Garden is Swasey's only surviving Times Square theater.²

In 1913, Swasey wrote an article for The American Architect articulating his views on proportions for maximum effectiveness in sightlines and acoustics, and on his greatest concern, fire prevention.³ The Winter Garden has been described as "absolutely fireproof [with] more exits than any other auditorium in the United States."⁴ Its construction incorporates all Swasey's essential safety features: large stairwells, ample corridor space, many exits, metal fixtures and accessories when possible, and use of brick and metal dividers between all rooms and floors.

Swasey's concerns were surprisingly foresighted. In 1920, fire in the adjoining building between the Winter Garden Theater and the Capitol Theater caused one million dollars in damages. Though the Winter Garden suffered little damage, J.J. Shubert⁵ was injured by falling glass as he nervously paced the theater's runway.

(PD)

Notes

1. Biographical information on Swasey from Charles C. Savage, Architecture of the Private Streets of St. Louis (Columbia, Mo: University of Missouri Press, 1987), pp. 48-53.
2. For these theaters see "Nazimova's Thirty-ninth street Theatre," Architects and Builders' Magazine, 42 (June 1910), 348-350; "New Weber & Fields Theatre, 44th Street near Broadway, New York," Architecture and Building 45 (March 1913), 103-106; Mary C. Henderson, The City and the Theatre (Clifton, N.J.: James T. White and Co., 1973), pp. 234, 276.
3. William Albert Swasey, "A Few Essentials in Theatre Construction," American Architect 103 (January 22, 1913), 53-62.
4. "The Winter Garden," Architecture and Building 43 (May 1911), 331.
5. New York Evening Mail, October 25, 1920.

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),¹ fourteen of which are in active theatrical use, as well as five that have been demolished.² 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.³ 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, including the 1923 redesign of the Winter Garden, and was even the architect for their private residences.⁴

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;⁵ 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 been 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 style⁶, the Brooks Atkinson is a brick building articulated by three Palladian openings supported by twisted columns. Roundel panels and a Spanish-tiled parapet 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."⁷ All three were constructed of yellow brick and adorned with areas of decorative terra-cotta pilasters, twisted columns, arches, parapets, and columned loggias.⁸

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.⁹

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.¹⁰ 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 Winter Garden Theater

One of the largest, and oldest, theaters on Broadway, the Winter Garden has a long and complex building history, dating from c. 1885 when William K. Vanderbilt built his American Horse Exchange on the site. Times Square, then still known as Long Acre Square, was a center of the horse and carriage trade. In 1896, Vanderbilt completely rebuilt the Exchange, using many of the walls from the original structure; the new Exchange included stables, a riding auditorium, and an auction ring.¹ The designer of the 1896 rebuilding was A. V. Porter (1856-1909), architect for the Metropolitan Railway who maintained an outside practice in Brooklyn and New York between 1886 and 1897.²

By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, Times Square had become a theatrical center. In 1910, Vanderbilt was approached by Lee Shubert, whom he had met through his involvement with the Century Theater on Central Park West. The Shuberts wanted to open a new theater to be a large, lavish showcase for musical revues, and Vanderbilt agreed to lease them the Horse Exchange building.

The location of the Horse Exchange at Broadway and West 50th Street, north of the theater district which was then centered in the low 40s, was something of a gamble for the Shuberts. The building itself, however, amply suited their vision of a vast 1800-seat auditorium and vaudeville stage, to be "the largest of any theater in New York excepting the Hippodrome, the Capitol and the Metropolitan Opera House."³

The Shuberts retained W. Albert Swasey to rebuild the Exchange as their new revue theater. Swasey converted the auction ring of the Horse Exchange, an enormous space with a high ceiling supported by exposed trusses, into a large auditorium. His adaptation left the trusses exposed, but covered the walls and ceiling with wooden latticework.⁴ A painted sky and landscaped walls visible through the lattice gave the impression that

"the entire audience...[was] witnessing a theatrical performance high above the city sidewalks and in the open air, protected from the sky by a huge pergola with trellised roof."⁵ In keeping with the garden theme,

All the floors are covered with red Pompeian tile, and the wall spaces are decorated with Pompeian pottery, statuary, shrubs and flower boxes.⁶

John Wanamaker provided the interior decor.

The new 1800-seat house was unusually wide, bringing the wrap-around balcony and boxes in close proximity to the stage. One of its most famous features, added the year following its opening, was the grand runway. This device developed by noted German producer/director Max Reinhardt, as a means of breaking down the invisible wall between audience and players, had been introduced to Broadway audiences the previous season when Reinhardt's Deutsche Theater troupe appeared at the Casino Theater in Sumurun, coproduced by Winthrop Ames and the Shuberts. At the Winter Garden the runway proved uniquely suited to the intimacy of Al Jolson's style and to the display of the Whirl of Society's eighty nearly-nude showgirls.⁷ Besides the extraordinary auditorium, the Winter Garden provided its patrons with all the expected luxuries, including a large refreshment room with balconies over the sidewalk and large windows overlooking the stage, a large promenade on each level, widely spaced seats, and a "receptacle for cigar ashes attached to the back of each chair."⁸

The Shuberts named their new theater the "Winter Garden," suggestive of such European institutions as the Berlin Winter Garden and "the style of entertainment that is supposed to be most popular in the giddy centres of Continental Europe."⁹ Dubbed "Broadway's Largest Temple of Folly,"¹⁰ by the World, the Winter Garden opened in 1911 with La Belle Paree, the first in a series of elaborate revues combining operetta, musical comedy, variety and spectacle which were to occupy the theater successfully for the next ten years. During this period the Winter Garden's stage and grand runway provided the springboard for numerous budding talents in the musical theater. On the the Winter Garden's tenth anniversary a critic for the Evening Globe wrote that

the Winter Garden has grown into a landmark -- a point of interest which receives as much attention from out-of-town visitors as Grant's Tomb or the Statue of Liberty, but which, unlike the historic points mentioned, is also visited by the local populace.¹¹

Despite such renown, extravaganzas such as those mounted at the Winter Garden were beginning to go out of fashion. In 1922-23, in response to a gradual shift in popularity from the older style productions to more intimate revues, the Shuberts modernized and scaled down their theater.¹² According to the New York Times,

The theatre will still be used for musical shows but it will be designed more for revue than extravaganza.¹³

To make the necessary changes they commissioned Herbert J. Krapp, who had

replaced Swasey and then Henry B. Herts as the Shuberts' architect of choice.

The changes and the rationale for making them were described by a contemporary architectural periodical:

A complete transformation has been effected in the theatre and it reopens its doors as an intimate playhouse, presenting a different style of entertainment from that which has been associated with the building. Several months ago the Messrs. Shubert decided to rebuild the theater, making it cozier and more intimate.... While the seating capacity of the Winter Garden remains practically the same, a new arrangement of the chairs has been installed, giving the spectators a better vision of the stage and at the same time affording the actors a closer contact with the audience. The architectural scheme of the interior is designed to permit an unobstructed view of the stage--a detail that is necessary when musical productions with their unusually large number of dancing features are considered.¹⁴

The Winter Garden's apron stage and runway were removed and replaced by seats,

bringing the players much closer to the audience....The proscenium arch has been lowered and narrowed, though the dimensions of the stage are to be nearly the same as heretofore, permitting the elaborate presentations which have always been identified with the playhouse.¹⁵

Krapp's design changes included the lowering of the auditorium ceiling to just above the level of the stable's (and Swasey's) structural supports. He replaced the single balcony-level box with two levels of triple boxes, and added a row of columns at either side of the balcony. He replaced the lattice-work effect with the handsome Adamesque-style ornament of the kind with which he adorned most of his Broadway theaters; he treated the promenades and interior foyers in the same fashion.

The Adamesque style takes its name from the brothers Robert and James Adam, 18th century British architects. Robert Adam (1728-1792), following English tradition, went to Italy to study the monuments of classical antiquity, but unlike his predecessors was attracted not to the great public monuments but rather to ancient domestic buildings. He took inspiration from these works to develop a highly ornamental and refined style of low-relief plasterwork with which he adorned a succession of English town and country houses.¹⁶

Adam's works were equally notable for their plans: the rooms in his houses were often circular, or oval, or rectangular with curved ends. A typical Adam room might be a long rectangular hall with a curved apse at one end, with walls articulated by shallow ornamental pilasters and bands of swags, and a ceiling covered with delicate plaster fan-light shaped tracery and murals of rustic scenes.¹⁷

Robert Adam became quite influential in his time, and his work was widely imitated, making the "Adamesque" something of a generic 18th century style. When English architecture crossed the Atlantic with the colonists in the 18th century, versions of the Adamesque became the style of Federal America. An early 20th-century revival of interest in the Georgian and Federal periods in this country brought with it a revival of the Adamesque for interior decor.

Several early Broadway theaters were designed in the neo-Georgian or neo-Federal styles (e.g. the Little Theater, 1912, and the Henry Miller Theater, 1917-18), and their red-brick Georgian exteriors were complemented by Adamesque plasterwork ornament in their interiors. In the 1920s, the style became very popular, and was used freely, particularly by theater architects such as Herbert Krapp and Thomas Lamb, in theaters whose exteriors had nothing to do with the neo-Georgian.

Krapp's ornamental reworking of the Winter Garden Theater is a handsome adaptation of the Adamesque style. He used bands of Adamesque plasterwork effectively to outline the chief elements of the auditorium's configuration, including the proscenium arch, the boxes, and the surfaces of the ceiling trusses. The great variety of plaster ornament includes stylized Corinthian columns, foliation, and circular centerpieces simulating coffers and swags.

Despite several further alterations, including the removal of its orchestra-level boxes, and the extensive redecoration for the current production (Cats), the interior of the Winter Garden Theater survives remarkably intact, and reflects its long and unusual history. The silhouette of the old Horse Exchange can still be read in the auditorium's structure underneath Herbert Krapp's elegant Adamesque treatment (and critics writing unfavorable reviews have long liked to pretend they could smell something of the building's former occupants). The unusual size and configuration of the Winter Garden have contributed to its long history as one of the most successful of all Broadway theaters.

(PD, AR)

Notes

1. New York City, Department of Buildings, Manhattan, New Building Permit 1217-96; "undersigned give notice they intend to use all walls of present bldg that may be in good condition"; work commenced Oct 25, 1896, completed May 1, 1897.
2. Dennis Steadman Francis, Architects in Practice New York City, 1840-1900 (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1979), pp. 62, 94.
3. "The Winter Garden, New York," Architecture and Building 55 (April 1923), 40.

4. Swasey's alterations are documented by New York City Department of Buildings, Manhattan, Alteration Permit 1226-1910, work commenced July 11, 1910, completed April 15, 1912.
5. "The Winter Garden," Architecture and Building 43 (May 1911), 331.
6. Ibid.
7. Jerry Stagg, The Brothers Shubert, (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 118.
8. Ibid., p. 330; "Winter Garden Open with Dazzling Show," unidentified clipping in the Winter Garden Theater Clipping File, Billy Rose Theater Collection, Lincoln Center Branch, New York Public Library.
9. "Big, Gay Crowd Opens New Winter Garden," The World, March 21, 1911.
10. Ibid.
11. Joseph R. Fliesler, "Winter Garden to Hold Tenth Birthday Party," New York Evening Post, March 18, 1921.
12. "Winter Garden to Be Rebuilt," New York Times, November 29, 1922, p. 20.
13. Ibid.
14. "The Winter Garden, New York," p. 40.
15. Ibid.
16. This brief account of the work of Robert Adam is based on Margaret Whinney, "The Adam Style," in Home House: No. 20 Portman Square (Feltham, Middlesex: The Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd, 1969), pp. 15-17.
17. See for instance the Back Parlour of Home House, 20 Portman Square, London, designed by Robert Adam and built c.1775.

The Winter Garden as a Playhouse¹

The Winter Garden opened on March 20, 1911 with La Belle Paree, a revue that marked the Broadway debut of Al Jolson.² The critics raved. "...New York's latest plaything is a very flashy toy, full of life and go and color, and with no end of jingle to it."³ Jolson returned in the fall of 1911, co-starring with French chanteuse Gaby Deslys and talented newcomer Mae West in Vera Violetta. In the spring of 1912 Jolson appeared in the Whirl of Society, the first show to employ the Winter Garden's famed runway. Later in 1912, the Shuberts inaugurated another tradition, the first of their annual Passing Show revues which featured such legendary performers as Fred and Adele Astaire, Marilyn Miller, Willie and Eugene Howard, Ed Wynn, Frank Fay, Marie Dressler, Fred Allen and George Jessel.

Although Jolson never appeared in the Passing Shows, he continued to star in Winter Garden musicals including The Honeymoon Express (1913) which also featured Fanny Brice, Robinson Crusoe, Jr. (1916), Sinbad (1918), and Big Boy (1925). It was in Sinbad that Jolson introduced two of his greatest hits, "Mammy" and "Rock-a-Bye Your Baby with a Dixie Melody." George Gershwin's first hit, "Swanee," was added to the score while the show was on tour.

Remodeled by Herbert Krapp in 1922-23, the Winter Garden continued to house revues, notably the annual editions of John Murray Anderson's Greenwich Village Follies (1923, 1926, 1928) and the notoriously nude Artists and Models (1925, 1927). In 1928, following the success of The Jazz Singer, Warner Brothers leased the house for their all-talking, all-singing motion pictures, opening the theater with former Winter Garden star Al Jolson in The Singing Fool.

In 1933, having constructed their own premiere house at West 51st Street and Broadway, the Hollywood (now the Mark Hellinger) Theater, Warner Brothers gave up their lease on the Winter Garden. The theater successfully returned to legitimate productions with the Ziegfeld Follies of 1934, starring Fanny Brice, Willie and Eugene Howard, and Vilma and Buddy Ebsen. It was followed by the sparkling Life Begins at 8:40 with songs by Harold Arlen, Yip Harburg and Ira Gershwin, and a talented cast that included Bert Lahr, Ray Bolger and Luella Gear. In 1935, Vincente Minnelli began his happy association with the Winter Garden as revue master for At Home Abroad, which featured Beatrice Lillie, Ethel Waters, Eleanor Powell and Reginald Gardiner. Minnelli also directed and designed the sets for this notable show which introduced Lillie's famous "Dozen Double Damask Dinner Napkins" routine. A year later, Minnelli directed and designed the sets and costumes for the Ziegfeld Follies with Fanny Brice, Bob Hope, Eve Arden and Josephine Baker. At the end of 1936, yet another Minnelli show opened, The Show Is On, with songs by the Gershwins and Hoagy Carmichael, and a skit with Bea Lillie in which she swung on a half-moon dropping garters onto bald-headed men in the audience. Ed Wynn followed in Hooray for What!, an anti-war musical with songs by Harold Arlen and Yip Harburg.

Then in 1938, the phenomenally successful Hellzapoppin with Ole Olsen and Chic Johnson moved from the Forty-Sixth Street Theater to the Winter Garden for a four-year run. They followed it in 1941 with the hit Sons O'Fun and in 1944 with the less successful Laffing Room Only. The Emmerich Kalman operetta Marinka was the last legitimize production to play the Winter Garden in 1945 before the theater reverted to a film policy that lasted three years.

The Winter Garden re-opened in 1948 with Mike Todd's extravagant production of As the Girls Go, which scandalized Broadway audiences with its \$7.20 top, a record price at the time. In 1950, Todd continued his association with the house bringing in his bawdy Peep Show which starred Bobby Clark.

Notable productions from the 'fifties also included Top Banana with Phil Silvers as as television comedian said to be modeled on Milton Berle (1950), Wonderful Town, the Leonard Bernstein, Comden and Green musical based on My Sister Eileen with Rosalind Russell and Edie Adams (1953), and a musical version of Peter Pan with Mary Martin and Cyril Ritchard (1954).

In 1957 the last Ziegfeld Follies opened at the Winter Garden with Bea Lillie, Carol Lawrence and Billy De Wolfe. September 1957 brought Carol Lawrence back to the Winter Garden as Maria, the modern day Juliet of West Side Story. Conceived, choreographed, and directed by Jerome Robbins with a score by Leonard Bernstein this jazzy musical is considered a landmark of American musical comedy history.

The 1960s began with another hit musical, The Unsinkable Molly Brown, with the throaty-voiced Tammy Grimes and Harve Presnell. In 1964, Fanny Brice, who so often had starred in Winter Garden shows, was herself the subject of a Winter Garden musical, Funny Girl, which catapulted its lead Barbra Streisand to stardom. May 1966 brought Angela Lansbury in the Jerry Herman musical Mame with Bea Arthur lending her skillful support.

Stephen Sondheim supplied the house with its first hit of the 'seventies, the innovative Follies with Alexis Smith, John McMartin and Dorothy Collins. In 1972 Sam Waterston and Kathleen Widdoes starred in a production of Much Ado About Nothing set in Civil War times. Sondheim songs were heard twice more in the 'seventies in a revival of Gypsy with Angela Lansbury in 1974 and in the remarkable Pacific Overtures of 1976.

In June 1977, the multimedia show Beatlemania with Joe Peconno, Mitch Weissman, Leslie Franklin, and Justin McNeil opened for a two-year run. More recently the theater has featured Zoot Suit, Gilda Radner--Live From New York, and Othello with remarkable performances by James Earl Jones and Christopher Plummer. The glamour and excitement of Hollywood movies in the 'thirties was recreated in 42nd Street which played the Winter Garden from 1980 to 1981 before moving to the Majestic. Presently Cats, awarded seven Tony Awards in 1983, is still enjoying full houses at the Winter Garden.

(GH)

Notes

1. This production history of the Winter Garden 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).
2. Jerry Stagg, The Brothers Shubert, (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 106.

3. "Winter Garden Open with Dazzling Show," unidentified clipping in the Winter Garden Theater Clipping File, Billy Rose Theater Collection, Lincoln Center Branch, New York Public Library.

Description¹

Inner Lobby:

The inner lobby is a rectangular space with doors from the ticket lobby on the west wall and doors to the auditorium on the east wall. A staircase at the north end leads up to the first balcony level.

1) Ornament: Decorative ornament includes but is not limited to the following:

Walls: Panels with Adamesque foliation flank the doorways from the ticket lobby. These are flanked by stylized pilasters with Adamesque foliation on the shafts and stylized Corinthian capitals. The doorways to the auditorium are also flanked by stylized pilasters which support a continuous entablature that arches above the doorways.

Ceiling: Bands adorned with Adamesque foliation divide the ceiling into rectangular and diamond-shaped panels. The panels are further adorned with Adamesque motifs.

2) Attached fixtures:

Doors: The doors from the ticket lobby are bronze; the doors to the auditorium are bronze and glass.

Light Fixtures: Existing non-original light fixtures are stylistically compatible with the design of the space. Crystal chandeliers are suspended from the ceiling and sconces are placed on the wall panels.

Auditorium:

1) Configuration: The configuration of the auditorium consists of a space which is quite wide in relation to its depth, with a single balcony, an orchestra, a proscenium flanked by boxes, an orchestra pit in front of the stage, an orchestra promenade, a balcony promenade, a ceiling, a sounding board, a stage opening behind the proscenium arch, and the sloping floor extending towards the proscenium arch.

Proscenium: The proscenium is an elliptical arch.

Balcony: There is a single balcony with a shallowly raked floor. The balcony front is designed in a series of curves simulating boxes.

Boxes: Two tiers of boxes, three in each tier, with curved fronts, are located at each side of the proscenium. They are set on splayed wall sections.

Ceiling: Ribs divide the ceiling into vaults which span from the proscenium to the rear wall. The central vault is a shallow dome.

Sounding Board: The ceiling vault above the proscenium acts as a sounding board.

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

Orchestra Pit: The orchestra pit is placed in front of and below the level of the stage.

Promenades: The promenade at the rear of the orchestra partially wraps around the sides. The balcony promenade is at the rear of the center section of the balcony and wraps along the sides of the balcony. Columns mark the distinction between the areas of the promenades and the orchestra and balcony. In the balcony the columns support beams extending from the splayed wall sections of the boxes. The ceiling above the orchestra promenade is comprised of shallow coved sections created by ribs.

2) Ornament:

The decorative ornament is plasterwork in relief, 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 elliptical arch contains a wide band decorated with rosettes, foliated swags, and figures. The arch spandrels contain decorative medallions.

Orchestra promenade: The rear wall is divided into sections by pilasters with stylized Corinthian capitals. A dentiled and modillioned cornice spans the wall at the level of the capitals. The columns marking the division between orchestra and promenade also have stylized Corinthian capitals. The ceiling ribs are decorated with bands of Adamesque foliation. Adamesque foliation and circular centerpieces with simulated coffers and swags adorn the coved ceiling sections.

Boxes: The curved box fronts flare out above bands of moldings, some with swags and foliation. Rosettes and oval panels adorn the major portion of the box fronts. The underside of each box is outlined by foliate moldings. The boxes and their openings are flanked by stylized pilasters which extend from the orchestra level to the ceiling. The pilasters contain panels with Adamesque foliation and terminate in stylized capitals. Griffins and cartouches are placed on the walls above the openings to the upper tier of boxes.

Balcony: The decoration of the balcony front is a continuation of the decoration of the box fronts. The underside of the balcony is divided into panels by bands with Adamesque foliation. The panels have center medallions and latticework motifs.

Balcony promenade: The columns marking the distinction between balcony and promenade have stylized Corinthian capitals. The beams supported by the columns have foliate friezes.

Ceiling: The ribs which divide the ceiling into vaults are adorned with Adamesque foliation. Classical moldings and bands of Adamesque foliation further divide the vaults into panels. The central dome is also adorned with bands of Adamesque foliation and latticework motifs. The panel containing the dome has four medallions with fauns playing pipes and lyres at the corners.

Sounding Board: A band with Adamesque foliation surrounds a panel depicting a woodland scene with figures dancing and playing musical instruments.

3) Attached fixtures:

Light fixtures: Existing light fixtures appear to date from the 1923 renovation of the theater. They are currently in orchestra promenade only, placed on the walls and suspended from the ceiling of the

4) Known alterations: Air conditioning duct covers have been placed on the underside of the balcony. The interior of the auditorium was extensively redecorated for the current production in 1982. Light fixtures were removed. The balcony and box fronts were covered with scenic effects. A portion of the ceiling dome has been removed. The standing rail at the rear of the orchestra was moved further back, the stage thrust forward beyond the proscenium arch, and the auditorium was painted black. A modern lighting bridge has been suspended from the ceiling.

(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 Winter Garden 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 created for the Shubert Organization during the early decades of this century, it helped shape the character of the Broadway theater district. Remodeled from a horse exchange in 1910-11 by W. Albert Swasey, and redesigned in 1922 by Herbert J. Krapp, the most prolific architect of the Broadway theater district, the Winter Garden represents an unusual aspect of the nation's theatrical

history. Its unusual size and configuration have contributed to the theater's long history as one of the most successful of all Broadway theaters, while its ornamental treatment is an excellent example of the elegant Adamesque style with which Herbert Krapp adorned the Broadway theaters he designed.

For three quarters of a century the Winter Garden 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) 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, Charles Savage, 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 Winter Garden Theater, first floor interior consisting of the inner lobby, the auditorium, the stage; 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 Winter Garden Theater Interior survives today as one of the historic theater interiors that symbolize American theater for both New York and the nation; that, originally William K. Vanderbilt's American Horse Exchange, it was rebuilt as a theater in 1910-11 as one of the group of theaters constructed for the Shubert Organization during the early decades of this century which helped shape the character of the Broadway theater district; that it is among the oldest theaters surviving in the Broadway theater district; that its original design for the Shuberts by architect W. Albert Swasey was a skilful reuse of an older space for theatrical use; that it was remodeled in 1922-23 by Herbert J. Krapp, the most prolific architect of the Broadway theater district; that as a Shubert theater designed by Swasey and remodeled by Krapp it represents a special aspect of the nation's theatrical history; that the unusual size and configuration of its interior, reflecting its unusual history, have contributed to its long history as one of the most successful of all Broadway theaters; that its ornamental treatment is an excellent example of the elegant Adamesque style with which Herbert Krapp adorned the Broadway theaters he designed; that for three quarters of a century, beginning with the musical revues which brought it early fame, the Winter Garden Theater 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 Winter Garden Theater, first floor interior consisting of the inner lobby, the auditorium, the stage; 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; 1634-1646 Broadway, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1022, Lot 26, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.

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APPENDIX

The following production history of the Winter Garden 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); 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.

1911

BOW SING & LA BELLE PAREE 3/20/11 (104 perfs.); with Al Jolson, Mitzi Hajos, Tempest and Sunshine.

REVUE OF REVUES 9/27/11 (55 perfs.); with Gaby Deslys.

VERA VIOLETTA 11/20/11 (112 perfs.) by Leonard Liebbling and Harold Attridge; with Al Jolson, Mae West, Gaby Deslys and Stella Mayhew.

1912

WHIRL OF SOCIETY 3/5/12 (136 perfs.) by Harrison Rhodes, lyrics by Harold Attridge, music by Louis A. Hirsh; with Al Jolson and Stella Mayhew/Sesostra by Leon Pavi and Henri Hirshmann; with Lina Imperia.

PASSING SHOW OF 1912 7/22/12 (136 perfs.) with Eugene and Willie Howard, Charlotte Greenwood and Trixie Friganza.

BROADWAY TO PARIS 11/20/12 (77 perfs.) by George Bronson-Howard and Harold Attridge, music by Max Hoffman; with Louise Dresser and Irene Bordoni.

1913

THE HONEYMOON EXPRESS 2/6/13 (156 perfs.) book and lyrics by Joseph W. Herbert and Harold Attridge, music by Jean Schwartz; with Fanny Brice and Ernest Glendinning.

PASSING SHOW OF 1913 7/24/13 (116 perfs.); with Charles King, Bessie Clayton, John Charles Thomas and Charlotte Greenwood.

THE PLEASURE SEEKERS 11/3/13 (72 perfs.) by Edgar Smith, lyrics and music by E. Ray Goetz; with Hugh Cameron and Dorothy Jardon.

1914

THE WHIRL OF THE WORLD 1/10/14 (161 perfs.) book & lyrics by Harold Atteridge, music by Sigmund Romberg; with Willie and Eugene Howard, May Boley and Lester Sheehan.

PASSING SHOW OF 1914 6/10/14 (133 perfs.) by Harold Atteridge, music by Harry Carroll and Sigmund Romberg; with Marilyn Miller.

DANCING AROUND 10/10/14 (145 perfs.) book & lyrics by Harold Atteridge, music by Harry Carroll and Sigmund Romberg; with Al Jolson and Clifton Webb.

1915

MAID IN AMERICA 2/18/15 (108 perfs.) by Harry Atteridge, music by Sigmund Romberg and Harry Carroll; with Blossom Seeley, Nora Bayes and Mlle, Dazie.

PASSING SHOW OF 1915 5/29/15 (145 perfs.) book and lyrics by Harold Atteridge, music by W. F. Peters and J. Leubrie Hill; with Marilyn Miller, John Charles Thomas, John Boyle, John T. Murray, Daphne Pollard, Willie and Eugene Howard.

A WORLD OF PLEASURE 10/14/15 (116 perfs.) book and lyrics by Harold Atteridge, music by Sigmund Romberg; with Clifton Crawford, Lew Holtz and Sydney Greenstreet.

1916

ROBINSON CRUSOE, JR. 2/17/16 (139 perfs.) book and lyrics by Harold Atteridge and Edgar Smith, music by Sigmund Romberg and James Hanley; with Al Jolson and Kitty Doner.

PASSING SHOW OF 1916 6/22/16 (140 perfs.) book and lyrics by Harold Atteridge, music by Sigmund Romberg and Otto Motzan; with Ed Wynn and Herman Timberg.

THE SHOW OF WONDERS 10/26/16 (209 perfs.) book and lyrics by Harold Atteridge, music by Sigmund Romberg, Otto Motzan, and Herman Timberg; with Marilyn Miller, Eugene and Willie Howard, and John T. Murray.

1917

PASSING SHOW OF 1917 4/26/17 (196 perfs.) book and lyrics by Harold Atteridge; music by Sigmund Romberg and Otto Motzan; with Irene Franklin, Dewolf Hopper and Jefferson De Angelis.

DOING OUR BIT 10/18/17 (130 perfs.) book and lyrics by Harold Atteridge, music by Sigmund Romberg and Herman Timberg; with Ed Wynn, Mabel Kelly and Ada Lewis.

1918

SINBAD 2/14/18 (164 perfs.) book and lyrics by Harold Atteridge, music by Sigmund Romberg and Al Jolson; with Al Jolson and Kitty Doner.

PASSING SHOW OF 1918 7/25/18 (124 perfs.) by Harold Atteridge, music by Sigmund Romberg and Jean Schwartz; with Sam White, Lou Clayton, Fred and Adele Astaire, Charles Ruggles, Frank Fay, Eugene and Willie Howard and Nita Naldi.

1919

MONTE CRISTO, JR. 2/12/19 (254 perfs.) books and lyrics by Harold Atteridge, music by Sigmund Romberg and Jean Schwartz; with James Davey, Clem Bevins and Rose Rolanda.

PASSING SHOW OF 1919 10/23/19 (280 perfs.); with Blanche Ring, Charles Winninger, Walter Wolf, James Barton.

1920

CINDERELLA ON BROADWAY 6/24/20 (126 perfs.) by Harold Atteridge, music by Bert Grant & Al Goodman.

BROADWAY BREVITIES 9/29/20 (105 perfs.) by Blair Treynor, Archie Gottler, Arthur Jackson, music by George Gershwin; with Eddie Cantor.

PASSING SHOW OF 1921 12/29/20 (191 perfs.) by Harold Atteridge, music by Jean Schwartz; with Willie and Eugene Howard, Marie Dressler and J. Harold Murray.

1921

THE WHIRL OF NEW YORK 6/13/21 (124 perfs.) by Hugh Morton and Edgar Smith; with J. Harold Murray and Dorothy Ward.

1922

MAKE IT SNAPPY 4/13/22 (96 perfs.) by Harold Atteridge, music by Jean Schwartz; with J. Harold Murray, Georgia Hale and Eddie Cantor.

SPICE OF 1922 7/6/22 (85 perfs.) by Jack Lait; with Nan Halperin.

PASSING SHOW OF 1922 9/20/22 (95 perfs.) by Harold Atteridge, music by Alfred Goodman; with Willie and Eugene Howard, and Fred Allen.

1923

THE DANCING GIRL 1/24/23 (142 perfs.); with Trini, Cyril Scott.

PASSING SHOW OF 1923 6/14/23 (118 perfs.); with Walter Woolf, George Jessel.

GREENWICH VILLAGE FOLLIES OF 1923 9/20/23 (131 perfs.) book and lyrics by John M. Anderson and Irving Caesar, music by Louis A. Hirsh and Con Conrad; with Tom Howard, Sammy White, Daphne Pollard, Eva Puck and Irene Delroy.

1924

INNOCENT EYES 5/20/24 (119 perfs.) by Harold Atteridge, lyrics by Harold Atteridge and Tot Seymour, music by Sigmund Romberg and Jean Schwartz; with Mistinguett, Lew Hearn and Edythe Baker.

PASSING SHOW OF 1924 9/23/24 (106 perfs.); with James Barton.

1925

BIG BOY 1/7/25 (48 perfs.) by Harold Atteridge, music by James F. Hanley and Joseph Meyer, lyrics by Bud DeSylva; with Al Jolson.

ARTISTS AND MODELS OF 1925 6/24/25 (416 perfs.) by Harold Atteridge and Harry Wagstaff Gribble, lyrics by Clifford Gorey, music by Alfred Goodman, J. Fred Coots, Maurice Rubens; with Phil Baker, Frances Willems and Walter Woolf.

1926

GREENWICH VILLAGE FOLLIES 3/15/26 (180 perfs.).

GREAT TEMPTATIONS 5/18/26 (197 perfs.) by Harold Atteridge, music by Maurice Rubins, lyrics by Clifford Corey.

GAY PAREE 11/9/26 (175 perfs.) by Harold Atteridge, music and lyrics by Alberta Nichols and Mann Holiner; with Chic Sale, Jack Haley, Winnie Lightner and Billy B. Van.

1927

THE CIRCUS PRINCESS 4/25/27 (192 perfs.) by Harry Smith from the original by Julius Brammer and Alfred Grunald, music by Emmerich Kalman; with Guy Robertson and Poodles Hanneford and his family of bareback riders.

ARTISTS AND MODELS OF 1927 11/15/27 (151 perfs.) music by Harry Akst and Maurie Rubens, lyrics by Benny Davis, J. Kiern Brennan, Jack Osterman, Ted Lewis; with Florence Moore, Ted Lewis, Jack Osterman and Jack Pearl.

1928

GREENWICH VILLAGE FOLLIES 4/9/28 (128 perfs.) by Harold Atteridge, music by Ray Perkins, Maurie Rubens, lyrics by Max and Nathaniel Lief.

1933

HOLD YOUR HORSES 9/25/33 (88 perfs.) by Russel Crouse and Corey Ford, music and lyrics by Russell Bennett, Robert Simon, Lois Alter, Arthur Swanstrom, Ben Oakland, Owen Murphy; with Joe Cook, Ona Munson and Frances Upton.

1934

ZIEGFELD FOLLIES OF 1934 1/4/34 (182 perfs.); with Fanny Brice, Jane Froman, Willie and Eugene Howard, Vilma and Buddy Ebsen.

LIFE BEGINS AT 8:40 8/27/34 (238 perfs.) by David Freedman, music by Harold Arlen, lyrics by Ira Gershwin and E.Y. Harburg; with Frances Williams, Ray Bolger, Brian Donlevy, Luella Gear, Bert Lahr and Dixie Dunbar.

1935

EARL CARROLL'S SKETCH BOOK OF 1935 6/4/35 (207 perfs.) by Eugene Conrad and Charles Sherman, music and lyrics by Charles Tobias, Murray Mencher, Charles Newman, Norman Zeno, Will Irwin; with Ken Murray.

AT HOME ABROAD 9/19/35 (198 perfs.) by Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz; with Beatrice Lillie, Ethel Waters, Eleanor Powell, Eddie Foy, Jr., and Reginald Gardiner.

1936

ZIEGFELD FOLLIES 1/30/36 (115 perfs.); with Bob Hope, Josephine Baker, Fanny Brice and Eve Arden.

ZIEGFELD FOLLIES OF 1936-1937 9/14/36 (112 perfs.) by Ira Gershwin and David Freedman; with Gypsy Rose Lee, Fanny Brice and Bobby Clark.

THE SHOW IS ON 12/25/36 (236 total perfs.) by Moss Hart and David Freedman, songs by Hoagy Carmichael and George and Ira Gershwin; with Bert Lahr, Beatrice Lillie and Mitzi Mayfair.

1937

HOORAY FOR WHAT! 12/1/37 (200 perfs.) by E.Y. Harburg, Howard Lindsay, Russel Crouse, lyrics by E.Y. Harburg, music by Harold Arlen; with Vivian Vance, Ed Wynn, Jack Whiting.

1938

YOU NEVER KNOW 9/21/38 (78 perfs.) by Cole Porter; with Clifton Webb, Rex O'Malley, Lupe Velez.

HELLZAPOPPIN 12/26/38 (1,404 total perfs.) written by and starring Ole Olsen and Chic Johnson, with, songs by Sammy Fain and Charles Tobias. (First opened at the Forty-Sixth Street Theater 9/22/38.)

1941

SONS O' FUN 12/1/41 (742 perfs.) by Ole Olsen, Chic Johnson and Hal Block, songs by Jack Yellin and Sammy Fain; with Chic Johnson, Ella Logan, Carmen Miranda and Ole Olsen.

1943

ZIEGFELD FOLLIES 4/1/43 (553 perfs.) lyrics by Jack Yellen, music by Ray Henderson; with Milton Berle, Ilona Massey, Arthur Treacher and Jack Cole.

1944

MEXICAN HAYRIDE 1/28/44 (479 perfs.) by Herbert and Dorothy Fields, music and lyrics by Cole Porter; with Bobby Clark, George Givot and June Havoc.

LAFFING ROOM ONLY 12/23/44 (22 perfs.) by Ole Olsen, Chic Johnson and Eugene Conrad, music and lyrics by Burton Lane; with Ole Olsen and Chic Johnson.

1945

MARINKA 7/18/45 (165 total perfs.) by George Marion Jr. and Karl Farkas, lyrics by George Marion, Jr., music by Emmerich Kalman; with Edith Fellows, Jerry Wayne, Harry Stockwell, Joan Roberts, (Moved to the Ethel Barrymore Theatre 10/1/45).

1948

AS THE GIRLS GO 11/13/48 (414 perfs.) by William Roos, lyrics by Harold Adamson, music by Jimmy McHugh; with Bobby Clark and Irene Rich.

1949

ROLAND PETIT'S LES BALLETS DE PARIS 10/6/49 (116 perfs.); with Roland Petit and Renee Jeanmarie.

1950

ALIVE AND KICKING 1/17/50 (46 perfs.) lyrics by Paul Francis Webster and Ray Golden, music by Hal Borre, Irma Jurist and Sammy Fain; with Gwen Verdon, Jack Gilford, Jack Cassidy.

MICHAEL TODD'S PEEP SHOW 6/28/50 (278 perfs.) by Bobby Clark, H.I. Phillips, William Roos, Billy K. Wells.

1951

MAKE A WISH 4/18/51 (102 perfs.) by Preston Sturges, music and lyrics by Hugh Martin; with Eda Heinemann, Nanette Fabray, Phil Leeds.

TOP BANANA 11/1/51 (350 perfs.) by Hy Kraft, music and lyrics by Johnny Mercer; with Phil Silvers.

1952

MY DARLIN' AIDA 10/27/52 (89 perfs.) by Charles Friedman based on Verdi's 'Aida'; with Elaine Malbin.

1953

WONDERFUL TOWN 2/25/53 (559 perfs.) by Joseph Fields and Jerome Chodorov, music by Leonard Bernstein, lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green; with Rosalind Russell, Edie Adams and George Gaynes.

1954

PETER PAN 10/20/54 (152 perfs.) by James M. Barrie, music by Mark Chaulap, lyrics by Carolyn Leigh; with Mary Martin and Cyril Ritchard.

1955

PLAIN AND FANCY 8/1/55 (461 total perfs.) by Joseph Stein and Will Glickman, lyrics by Arnold B. Horwitt, music by Albert Hague; with Richard Derr, Barbara Cook and David Daniels (First opened at the Mark Hellinger 1/27/55.)

THE VAMP 11/10/55 (60 perfs.) by John Latouche and Sam Locke, lyrics by John Latouche, music by James Mundy; with Carol Channing, Steve Reeves and Will Geer.

1956

TAMBURLAINE THE GREAT 1/19/56 (20 perfs.) by Christopher Marlowe; with Anthony Quayle, William Shatner and Colleen Dewhurst.

SHANGRI-LA 6/13/56 (21 perfs.) by James Hilton, Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee based on a novel by James Hilton; with Dennis King, Jack Cassidy, Alice Ghostley, Carol Lawrence.

RICHARD II 10/23/56 (95 perfs.) by William Shakespeare; with The Old Vic Company.

1957

CHRISTOPHE COLOMB 1/30/57 (6 perfs.) by Paul Claudel; with Madeleine Renquid, Jean-Louis Barrault and their company.

VOLPONE 2/4/57 (4 perfs.) by Jules Romaine after Ben Johnson; with Jean-Louis Barrault.

ZIEGFELD FOLLIES 3/1/57 (123 perfs.); with Beatrice Lillie, Carol Lawrence, Billy DeWolfe.

WEST SIDE STORY 9/26/57 (732 total perfs.) by Arthur Laurents, music by Leonard Bernstein, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim; with Mickey Calin, Larry Kert, Ken LeRoy, Carol Lawrence and Chita Rivera. (Moved to the Broadway Theater 2/23/59.)

1959

JUNO 3/9/59 (16 perfs.) by Joseph Stein based on a play by Sean O'Casey, music and lyrics by Marc Blitzstein; with Shirley Booth and Melvyn Douglas.

SARATOGA 12/7/59 (80 perfs.) based on a novel by Edna Ferber, music by Harold Arlen, lyrics by Johnny Mercer; with Carol Lawrence.

1960

WEST SIDE STORY 4/27/60 with Thomas Hasson, Larry Kert, George Marcy, Carol Lawrence.

THE UNSINKABLE MOLLY BROWN 11/3/60 (532 perfs.) by Richard Morris, music and lyrics by Meredith Willson; with Tammy Grimes and Harve Presnell.

1962

ALL AMERICAN 3/19/62 (80 perfs.) by Mel Brooks, music by Charles Strouse, lyrics by Lee Adams; with Ray Bolger and Eileen Herlie.

EDDIE FISHER AT THE WINTER GARDEN 10/2/62 (40 perfs.); with Eddie Fisher, Juliet Prowse, Dick Gregory.

NOWHERE TO GO BUT UP 11/10/62 (9 perfs.) book and lyrics by Janes Lipton, music by Sol Berkowitz; with Dorothy Loudon and Martin Balsam.

1963

THE LADY OF THE CAMELLIAS 3/20/63 (13 perfs.) by Giles Cooper based on the novel by Alexander Dumas; with Susan Strasberg and John Stride.

SOPHIE 4/15/63 (8 perfs.) by Phillip Pruneau based on the life of Sophie Tucker, music and lyrics by Steve Allen; with Libi Staiger and Art Lund.

PAJAMA TOPS 5/31/63 (52 perfs.) by Mawley Green and Ed Feilbert; with Richard Vath and June Wilkinson.

1964

FUNNY GIRL 3/26/64 (1,348 perfs.) by Isobel Lennart, music by Jule Styne, lyrics by Bob Merrill; with Barbra Streisand, Sydney Chaplin and Danny Meehan.

1966

MAME 5/24/66 (1,508 perfs.) by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, based on a novel by Patrick Dennis; with Angela Lansbury, Beatrice Arthur and Jerry Lanning.

1969

JIMMY 10/23/69 (84 perfs.) by Melville Shavelson from a novel by Gene Fowler, music and lyrics by Bill and Patti Jacob; with Frank Gorshin, and Anita Gillette.

1970

GEORGY 2/26/70 (4 perfs.) by Tom Mankiewicz from a novel by Margaret Forster, lyrics by Carole Bayer, music by George Fischhoff; with Dilys Watling.

1971

FOLLIES 4/4/71 (522 perfs.) by James Goldman, music and lyrics by Steven Sondheim; with Alexis Smith, Yvonne De Carlo, Dorothy Collins, Ethel Barrymore Colt, John McMartin, Gene Nelson and Ethel Shula.

1972

NEIL DIAMOND ONE MAN SHOW 10/5/72 (21 perfs.)

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING 11/11/72 (116 perfs.) by William Shakespeare; with Sam Waterston, Kathleen Widdoes and April Shawhan.

1974

LIZA MINNELLI 1/6/74 (24 perfs.)

ULYSSES IN NIGHTTOWN 3/10/74 (69 perfs.) by Marjorie Barkentin from the novel by James Joyce; with Zero Mostel.

GYPSY 9/23/74 (120 perfs.) by Arthur Laurents, music by Jule Styne, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim; with Angela Lansbury.

1975

DOCTOR JAZZ 3/19/75 (5 perfs.) music and lyrics by Buster Davis; with Bobby Van and Lola Falana.

1976

PACIFIC OVERTURES 1/11/76 (193 perfs.) by John Weidman, music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim.

NATALIE COLE 11/23/76 (6 concert perfs.); with Natalie Cole, the Manhattans and Herbie Hancock.

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF 12/28/76 (167 perfs.) by Joseph Stein based on stories of Sholom Aleichem, music by Jerry Bock; with Zero Mostel, Thelma Lee.

1977

BEATLEMANIA 6/1/77 (920 perfs.) songs by John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison; with Joe Peconno, Mitch Weissman, Leslie Franklin, Justin McNeill (Moved to Lunt-Fontanne 3/1/79).

1979

ZOOT SUIT 3/25/79 (41 perfs.) by Luis Valdez; with Edward James Olmos, Daniel Valdez, Charles Aidman.

BRUCE FORSYTH ON BROADWAY 6/12/79 (6 perfs.)

GILDA RADNER--LIVE FROM NEW YORK 8/2/79 (56 perfs.)

COMIN UPTOWN 12/20/79 (45 perfs.) by Philip Rose and Peter Udell based on story by Charles Dickens; with Gregory Hines.

1980

THE ROAST 5/8/80 (4 perfs.) by Jerry Belson and Garry Marshall; with Peter Boyle, Bill Macy, Rob Reiner and Joe Silver.

42ND STREET 8/25/80 (still running as of 1/88) by Michael Stewart and Mark Bramble based on a novel by Bradford Ropes; music and lyrics by Harry Warren and Al Dubin; with Jerry Orbach, Tammy Grimes and Lee Roy Reams. (Moved to the Majestic Theater 3/30/81).

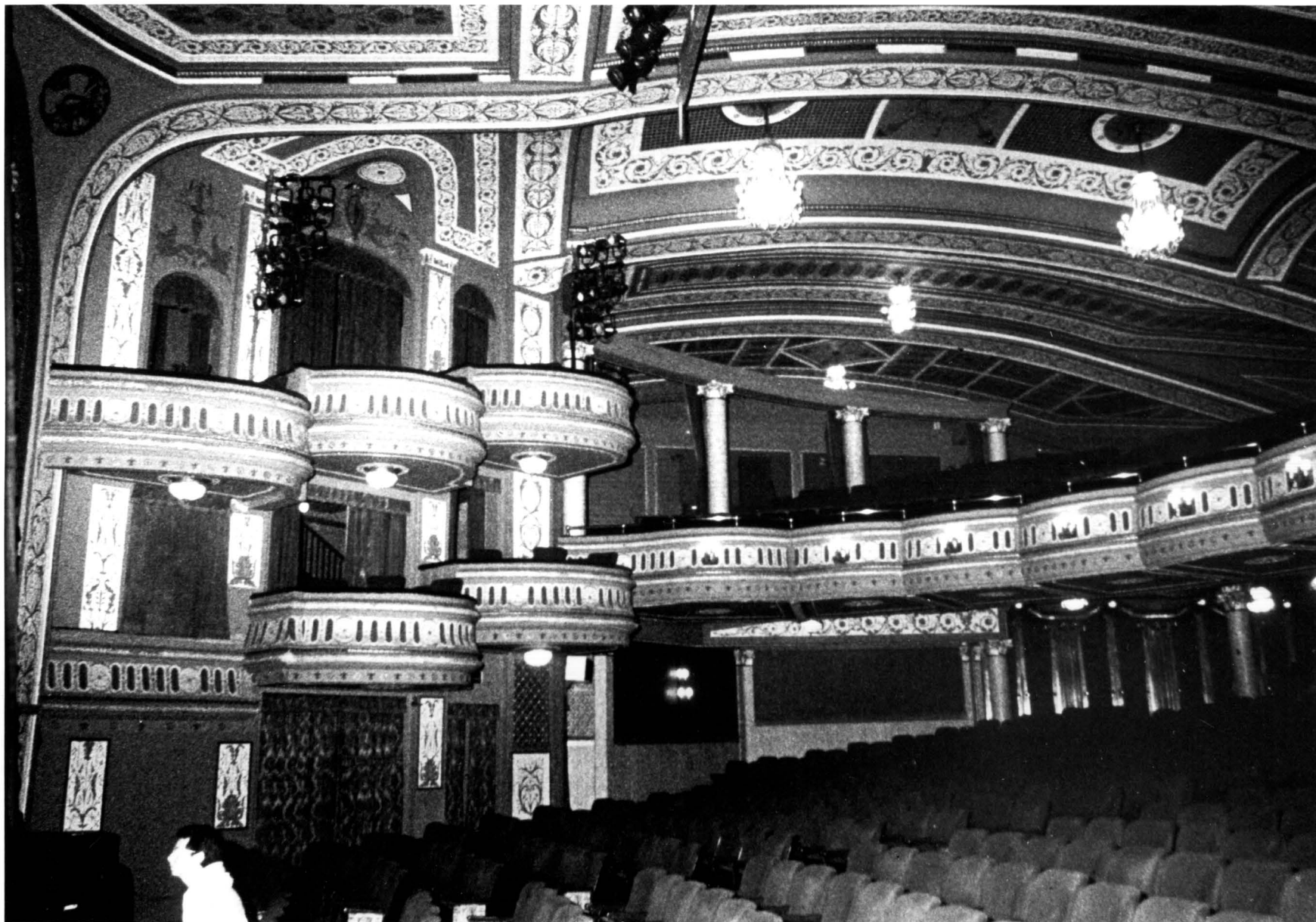
1981

CAMELOT 11/15/81 (57 perfs.) by Alan J. Lerner, based on a novel by T.H. White, music by Frederick Loewe, lyrics by Alan J. Lerner; with Richard Harris, Meg Bussert and Richard Muenz.

1982

OTHELLO 2/3/82 (122 perfs.) by William Shakespeare; with James Earl Jones and Christopher Plummer.

CATS 10/7/82 (still running as of 1/88) based on a book by T.S. Eliot, music by Andrew Lloyd Weber; with Ken Page and Betty Buckley.



Winter Garden Theater Interior
1634-1646 Broadway
Manhattan

Built: 1923
Architect: Herbert J. Krapp