DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED FEB 5 1976

DATE ENTERED MAY 1 7 1976

INVENTORY	NOMINATION	FORM DA	TE ENTERED N	IAY 171976	
SEE IN	ISTRUCTIONS IN HOW T TYPE ALL ENTRIES			MS	
1 NAME					
HISTORIC S					
Al Ringling The	eatre				
AND/OR COMMON					
LOCATION			**************************************		
STREET & NUMBER					
136 Fourth Aver	nue		NOT FOR PUBLICATIO		
CITY, TOWN		VICINITY OF	CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT		
Raraboo STATE		CODE	COUNTY	CODE	
Wisconsin 539		55	Sauk	111	
CLASSIFICA	ATION				
CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRI	ESENT USE	
DISTRICT	PUBLIC	X_OCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM	
X_BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	UNOCCUPIED	COMMERCIAL	PARK	
STRUCTURE	_вотн	WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	PRIVATE RESIDENC	
SITE OBJECT	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	X ENTERTAINME		
OBJEC1	IN PROCESSBEING CONSIDERED	X_YES: RESTRICTED _YES: UNRESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL	SCIENTIFIC	
	BEING CONSIDERED	NO	MILITARY	TRANSPORTATIONOTHER:	
STREET & NUMBER 9715 West Cente	ent Corporation				
city, town Milwaukee		VICINITY OF	STATE Wisconsin	53222	
	OF LEGAL DESCR	IPTION			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ET	^{.c.} Sauk County Cou	ırthouse			
STREET & NUMBER	515 Oak Street				
CITY, TOWN	Baraboo		STATE Wisconsin	53913	
6 REPRESENT	TATION IN EXIST	ING SURVEYS		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
TITLE	MITON IN LAIDI.	ING BURVETO			
	oric Preservation Pl	an: Volume II,	The Inventory		
DATE 1975		FEDERAL	XSTATECOUNTYLOC	AL	
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS	State Historical So	ciety of Wiscons	in		
CITY, TOWN			STATE		
	Madison		Wisconsin	5 3 7 0 6	

CONDITION

CHECK ONE

_ALTERED

CHECK ONE

XORIGINAL SITE

__MOVED DATE_____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Al Ringling Theatre has a two-story, terra-cotta street facade with Neo-Classical detailing. The entrance to the theater is marked by a triumphal arch motif. Applied to the piers are paired pilasters with Ionic capitals. A heavy entablature defines the arch, and above each of of the spring points is an urn supporting a sphere. The marquee is not original. To the left of the entrance are three bays with space for stores on the first floor and offices above. The second story of each bay is divided into three parts by Ionic columns, and each part has a French window and an iron railing. Behind the street facade is the brick auditorium and stage house.

The entrance lobby is elliptical and has paired travertine columns supporting a replica in high relief of Luca della Robbia's <u>Singing Gallery</u> figures. A narrow inner lobby divides the entrance from the truncated-ellipse-shaped auditorium which is modeled on the opera house at the Palace of Versailles. Seven hundred persons can be seated on the main floor, and an additional 102 can be seated in seventeen mezzanine-level boxes. The boxes are separated by Corinthian columns which support a heavy entablature. Above the cornice are murals depicting allegories of joy, delight, and other pleasurable emotions. A large chandelier hangs from the center of the ceiling. The draperies, carpet, and upholstery are a deep rose color that complements the pastels of the murals and the iyory and gold woodwork.

The pipe chamber for the Barton organ which replaced the original Hope Jones unit is located above the stage left proscenium so that the source of the music appears to be the auditorium dome rather than the organ console. The stage is seventy-four feet wide by thirty-one feet deep by fifty feet high with fly galleries located both left and right. The original fire curtain and two of the stock settings, a castle scene and a garden scene painted by the Chicago firm of Sosman and Landes, survive in good condition, as does the original switchboard. The dressing rooms are located below stage level.

The Al Ringling Theatre is in excellent condition and has had only minor alterations to the ticket window and the offices.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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SPECIFIC DAT	ES 1015	SCHEER/ARCH	HITECT C. W. and Geo	orge I., Rapp
		INVENTION		
<u>X</u> 1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	_OTHER (SPECIFY)
1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	_TRANSPORTATION
1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	X THEATER
1600-1699	XARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE
PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
PERIOD	Al	REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CF	TECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

During the first two decades of the twentieth century many theaters were built to handle the demand for movies accompanied by stage shows. These theaters were consciously designed to create the illusion of a luxurious environment where anyone who could afford the price of admission could sit in surroundings known only by the wealthy. The Al Ringling Theatre, built in 1915, is an outstanding example of such a small community and a monument to the munificence of Al Ringling, the eldest of the Ringling brothers.

The theatre was designed by the Chicago firm of C. W. and George L. Rapp, specialists in theatre design from 1906 to c. 1930. Their major commissions include the Oriental Theatre in Chicago, the Paramount Theatre (Manhattan) and the Kings Theatre (Brooklyn) in New York City, and the Ambassador Theatre and Office Building in St. Louis. The firm also designed the Capitol Theatre in Madison. When compared with these other theatres, the Al Ringling Theatre is significant for its intimate scale and the quality of its interior decoration when grandeur and quantity were dictating the use of ornament more than good taste.

Al Ringling (1852-1916), famous for his role as the leader of the Ringling Bros. Circus empire, was one of Baraboo's leading citizens. The presentation of a theatre to the community was a fitting gesture for a great showman, and Ringling spent over \$100,000 on the building, intending that it would eventually be publicly owned. The Al Ringling Theatre has been well-maintained, and it continues to present stage productions as well as films.

¹George L. Rapp (1878-1941), C. W. Rapp (d. 1926)

²Interior decoration designed by G. A. Brand Co., Chicago; lighting fixtures designed by Pearlmand Co., Chicago

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFEREN	CES
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Book Publishing Co., Inc., New York. 1927.	Iwo volumes.
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STATE CODE CO	UNTY CODE
11 FORM PREPARED BY	
NAME / TITLE	
Richard L. Cleary, Preservation Planning As	
ORGANIZATION	DATE December 10 1075
State Historical Society of Wisconsin	December 19, 1975 TELEPHONE
816 State Street	(608) 262-2970
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
Madison	Wisconsin 53706
12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION O	FFICER CERTIFICATION
THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS F	PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:
NATIONAL STATE	LOCAL X
As the designated Coate Historia Decrease Office for the National	111i-a-i- P
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Registe	
criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.	1
Q., %6:	-1. / _ -#
S.H.P.O. Signature	man of mile
TITLE Director, State Historical Society of	f Wisconsin DATE 1/24/76
FOR NPS USE ONLY	- 1,7,0
LHEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS NCLUDED IN THE	ENATIONAL REGISTER
Letling _ / _ ///	
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Christ Lus	DATE 5/10/01
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AC LUE DIRECTOR PEFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERV	DATE S/19/01