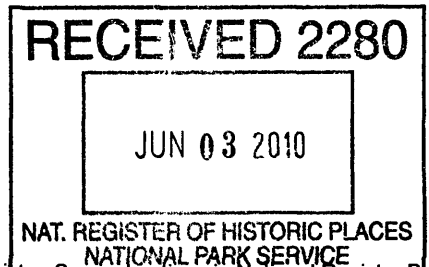


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

475



# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building  
other names/site number World Theater; Fitzgerald Theater; Fitzgerald Condominiums

### 2. Location

street & number 10 East Exchange Street and 488 North Wabasha Street  not for publication N/A  
city or town Saint Paul  vicinity  
state Minnesota code MN county Ramsey code 123 zip code 55101

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this X nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.  
In my opinion, the property X meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

    national     statewide X local

Britta L. Bloomberg 5/27/10  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Britta L. Bloomberg, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Minnesota Historical Society  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property     meets     does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date  
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

For Edson Beall JUL 19 2010  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
2	0	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

COMMERCE/TRADE: professional

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater

COMMERCE/TRADE: office building

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> AND 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS:

Beaux Arts/Beaux Arts Classicism

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Concrete

Brick

roof: Asphalt

other: Terra Cotta

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### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### **Summary Paragraph**

The Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building are located in downtown Saint Paul at the intersection of North Wabasha and East Exchange Streets on Block 7 of Bazille and Guerin's Addition to Saint Paul. The Shubert Building occupies the east corner of the intersection, with its long axis and main entries on North Wabasha to the southwest. The building's northeast wall partially abuts the Shubert Theatre, which fronts on East Exchange Street. A recess in the upper stories of the Shubert Building's northeast wall creates a small interior light well between the two buildings. A roof was extended over an alley along the theater's northeast wall, creating an enclosed light well. The light well's northeast wall adjoins a neighboring high-rise building. An alley runs southwest-northeast along the southeast side of both Shubert buildings. A modern parking deck is on the other side of the alley.<sup>1</sup>

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### **Narrative Description**

#### **Introduction**

The property includes two buildings, the Shubert Theatre and the adjacent Shubert Building, which originally held offices and commercial space and is now primarily residential. The original main entry to the theater was from a door on Wabasha Street in the Shubert Building. A lobby and hall in that building led to the theater. For this reason, both buildings are included in this nomination, although the door, lobby, and hall in the Shubert Building are no longer extant and the theater's entry has been reoriented to East Exchange Street.

To gain a better understanding of the integrity of the Shubert Theatre today, it is helpful to review the major remodeling campaigns that the building has experienced since it opened in 1910. The first came in 1930 when prominent theater architects Liebenberg and Kaplan gave it a showy makeover—"from front door to stage entrance," according to the *Saint Paul Dispatch*.<sup>2</sup> In addition to a new paint scheme for the lobby and auditorium, new carpets, a new stage curtain, and other cosmetic changes, there was a more significant alteration, the removal of the box seats around the proscenium. This left two loges with a simple paneled design at the main-floor level. Gold and crystal chandeliers were also installed in the auditorium.

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<sup>1</sup> The description of the two buildings is based on site visits by Stephanie Atwood on December 21, 2009 and January 11 and 27, 2010, and on Marshall and Fox, "Shubert Theatre," architectural plans, July 24, 1909, and Buechner and Orth, "Plans of Store Hotel Bldg to Be Created on Wabasha & Exchange Strs, Geo. Benz & Sons, Owners, Saint Paul, Minnesota," architectural plans, February 24, 1910, Northwest Architectural Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, and Miller, Hanson, Westerbeck, and Bell, "A Renovation of the World Theater," architectural plans, March 15, 1985, Minnesota Public Radio Archive, Saint Paul.

<sup>2</sup> "Shubert Ready for Opening Saturday," *Saint Paul Dispatch*, October 3, 1930.

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More changes came in 1933 when the theater was converted to show movies. Again, Liebenberg and Kaplan were responsible for the design, draping the auditorium with fabric to resemble the interior of an elaborate tent [See Figures 15 and 16]. While the fabric separated the balcony and gallery from the auditorium, making them unusable, these levels were left intact. Much of the original seating on the first floor was replaced by loges with armchairs and couches. The first-floor corridor behind the rear wall of the auditorium was probably created at this time [See Figures 11, 12, and 18]. Transverse beams highlighted with metallic paint trimmed the curved ceiling, which was painted with a dark enamel. The lobby was again redecorated.

When new owners took over the theater in 1952, they initiated more remodeling. The changes are not well documented, but reports from the 1970s indicate that the 1930s fabric was removed from the auditorium. The gallery and balcony were retained, but blocked off with a false ceiling. The paneled loge was covered over with wood battens. Blue acoustic tile extended up the auditorium walls to the dropped ceiling.<sup>3</sup>

Beginning in 1984, Minnesota Public Radio began rehabilitating and restoring the theater, guided by two firms with experience in working with historic properties: architects Miller, Hanson, Westerbeck, and Bell of Minneapolis and interior designers Conrad Schmitt Studios of New Berlin, Wisconsin. They used original building plans and historic photographs as guidelines for the work, but sometimes had to rely on conjecture to reconstruct original features, such as the box seats, that were not well documented. A clear rendering of the original plasterwork was unavailable, so designers placed intricate swirl designs on the face of the boxes based on Marshall and Fox's original plans. To replace sections of missing decorations, molds were cast from existing plasterwork along the walls, ceiling, and proscenium and installed piece by piece in appropriate locations. Twenty-three-karat gold leaf highlighted the intricacies of these details. The 1933 corridor behind the auditorium was maintained. The passageway leading to the original entry in the adjacent Shubert Building was permanently blocked, and the lobby on East Exchange was rehabilitated to serve as the main entry. A new entry vestibule was added to the theater's facade at that time.

### **Description**

The Shubert Theatre is roughly rectangular in plan. The building's northwest-southeast axis is 127'-6" long. The width of the front (northwest) facade is 62'. The auditorium is 68'-6" wide. The building measures 77'-6" at its widest point, which is the rear portion of the building that includes the dressing rooms on the northeast wall.

The theater's style is Beaux Arts Classicism. The front and part of the side walls of the concrete and steel structure are faced with stone. The majority of the side walls and the rear wall are common brick, although the southwest wall in the light well is a higher quality face brick. The 38'-6"-tall front facade is symmetrical with five bays flanked on the second and third floors by broad, flat pilasters. Next to the pilasters and separating the bays are five fluted Doric pilasters. Each bay on the first story holds a set of double doors with transoms holding painted latticework. Jack arches are above the recessed doorways. Beyond each of the outer doors are display cases that have traditionally held posters promoting events. The three central doors are enclosed by a modern portico with an 11' by 30' glass-walled vestibule. A large sign for the "Fitzgerald" projects from the wall directly above the portico.

A square-section molding with a smaller egg-and-dart course below it runs between the first and second stories and is incorporated into the portico. On the second story, each bay holds a twelve-light fixed window below a jack arch. Instead of a keystone, there is a projecting console, which extends up between the returns of a

<sup>3</sup> Dave Kenney, *Twin Cities Picture Show*, 182; Patricia Weaver Francisco, "The World Is Back in Business," *Minnesota Monthly* (May 1981): 10; Liebenberg and Kaplan, drawing for remodeling marquee and box office, August 10, 1954, "World Theater" file, Northwest Architectural Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

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pedimented hood. The bays are marked on the third story by fixed, multi-pane rectangular windows with metal screens with geometric tracery. Directly below the third-story windows is a decorative course ornamented with rosettes. An egg-and-dart molding runs beneath the projecting cornice, which extends slightly onto the facade of the adjacent Shubert Building.

A flat fascia serves as a parapet. Behind it, the roof angles up over the auditorium section of the interior. The front slope has two curved eyebrow dormers. Windows in the dormers are circular with mullions that radiate from the center. Further back, the flyloft rises 19' above the main roof.

The theater has basement, a main floor, a lower balcony, an upper balcony (hereafter referred to as the gallery), and an attic. The front entries open into a lobby with a curved rear (southeast) wall and grand staircases to the second floors at the northeast and southwest corners. Three curved oak counters are along the rear wall. The counter next to the southwest stair serves as a concession stand. A dentilated ledge that circles the room holds lights that project on the ceiling above. The ceiling has a single recessed panel with dentilated trim. While the staircases are original and retain their original cast-iron banisters, most of the other finishes were rehabilitated in the mid-1980s.

Two double-door entranceways bookend the central counter and lead into a corridor, which is curved to follow the line of the rear wall. A doorway near the center of the wall leads to an audio booth. An accessible toilet is located at the north end of the northwest wall. The ceiling of the corridor is arched, and transverse beams accentuate the shape. Again, most of the finishes are not original and were rehabilitated in the mid-1980s. Four double-door entryways along the southeast wall of the corridor lead to the main floor of the auditorium.

The 1,000-seat main auditorium has a curved rear wall, and a portion of the seating at the center rear was removed in 1986 to accommodate the audio booth. The seats, which have burgundy velvet upholstery, are divided into three sections with aisles on both sides. Most of the seats are fixed, although there are two sections of moveable seats at the rear. The main aisles are covered with carpeting, while the remaining floor is painted concrete. There are two bays of box seating on both sides of the proscenium arch, and each bay has two boxes. The areas below are filled in. The boxes are staggered, with those closer to the stage at a lower elevation. The entry arches to the boxes are square and have gold garland plaster decorations over the top of the doorway. The boxes are curved and are decorated with framed bands of swirled leaf patterns finished in gold on a rose-colored background. The balcony and gallery curve along the northeast and southwest walls of the auditorium to provide access to the boxes. Behind the filled-in entry arches are small stairways that provide access to both sets of boxes. A doorway on the west side of the stage can be accessed from behind the west boxes.

Plaster decorations adorn the proscenium arch. Motifs consist of a wide, central band of flowery sunburst patterns in an antiqued ivory finish with gold-leaf details. Simple bands of plaster painted blue and fruit and leaf garland decorations with gold ribbon details are on both sides of the central band. The main walls of the auditorium are plaster and are comparably more austere than the boxes and proscenium, decorated only with rectangular panels outlined with molding. Some of the panels hold sconces. Similar trim, accented with rose and blue paint, appears on the front of the balcony and gallery, where smaller square panels are decorated with rosettes. The ceiling of the auditorium is coffered, and the interior panel is trimmed with decorative plaster. A medallion motif is painted above the proscenium. The boxes were removed and much of the ornamentation was damaged by the many alterations the building has experienced. The original conditions were restored, as much as possible, in the mid-1980s.

The front of the stage is curved, and an orchestra pit is directly in front of it. The stage's opening is 36' feet wide, and the stage itself is 65' wide and 36' deep. A small stair at the stage's southwest corner leads to the

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basement. A large door on the rear wall provides access to the alley behind the building. Various rooms are located along the northeast wall of the stage and are enclosed in a bump-out on the rear of the northeast side of the building. At the main level, there is an office at the southeast corner, north of which is a corridor with a staircase. The staircase leads up to another two levels with dressing rooms, mechanical rooms, and restrooms. At the top level, metal grating provides access to the rear and southwest walls of the stage as well as the attic space above the ceiling of the auditorium. Two smoke hatches are at the center of the fly loft roof.

The balcony, mezzanine level, and gallery are reached by the two grand staircases in the first-floor lobby. A women's restroom occupies the western two-thirds of the mezzanine and a men's room takes the remaining third. Each restroom is accessed by its closest stairway. The balcony and gallery are identically sized and shaped, with a curved fascia that echoes the curve of the rear wall. The aisles and placement of seats align with those on the main floor. The balcony and gallery extend along the southwest and northeast walls of the auditorium, ending at the edge of the box seats. A vertical, foliated plaster band, painted gold, accentuates this line. Double-door exits are at this end of the balcony and the main floor, and additional pairs of exit doors are further back on these walls. Four cylindrical columns in the balcony support the gallery above. Several styles of theater seats with burgundy velvet upholstery provide most of the seating in the balcony and gallery, with some moveable chairs.

The basement level does not extend through the entire building, as the area under the auditorium has not been excavated. The floor of orchestra pit is around 2'-6" higher than the floor beneath the stage, which is 8' below grade. At the southeast corner are two bathrooms and a green room. The center portion of the floor is a large storage room and the orchestra pit, and a large rehearsal room is along the southwest wall. There is also a basement area under the front lobby, which primarily holds mechanical equipment. Two narrow walkways provide access to the area underneath the main floor's audio booth. The floor of this room sits about 10' below grade.

In October 1930, the *Saint Paul Dispatch* reported that the Shubert Theatre had been remodeled "from front door to stage entrance with the result that it is completely modernized and designed to satisfy the somewhat luxurious taste of the present generation of theatergoers." The work included a new canopy of one thousand lights on Wabasha Street. The lobby was repainted and included portraits of actors in the company. The auditorium was painted with "agreeable shades of brown and blue" and had green carpets, a rose stage curtain, and gold and crystal chandeliers, all part of the theater's "ambition to be a royal palace." Men's and women's smoking rooms, "a concession to changing social custom," were located below the auditorium.<sup>4</sup>

Architectural drawings indicate that Minneapolis's prominent theater architects Jacob J. Liebenberg and Seeman Kaplan were involved in the 1930 remodeling. One of their plans involved the removal of the eight box seats around the proscenium, leaving the two loges with the simple paneled design at floor level. "With the boxes removed the auditorium [had] the effect of space and height and intimacy all at the same time."<sup>5</sup> Decorative trim extended from both sides of the loge up to the level of the second balcony, where a broken pediment with an urn motif crowned the arch. The architects designed a glass box ticket window in the Wabasha Street lobby. Plans from the Kooler-Aire Corporation also lay out the specs for the installation of an air-conditioning system in October 1930. Photographs from the 1986 rehabilitation of the theater show

<sup>4</sup> "Shubert Ready for Opening Saturday," *Saint Paul Dispatch*, October 3, 1930.

<sup>5</sup> James Gray, "'Stock' Welcomed at Shubert Theater," *Saint Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch*, October 5, 1930.

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some of the 1930 remodeling work, and it appears that Liebenberg and Kaplan were attempting to convert the style of the auditorium space from French Rococo to French Provincial.<sup>6</sup>

In 1933, the theater was converted into a movie theater. The new ownership meant more changes to the interior, again designed by Liebenberg and Kaplan. The auditorium, which began as ornate and Rococo before being reconfigured into French Provincial in the 1930 remodeling, was now a proudly ostentatious combination of Art Deco and Exoticism [See Figures 15 and 16]. Using primarily fabric, the architects transformed the auditorium into a space resembling a silk Turkish tent—"splendor beyond compare . . . an atmosphere of refined intimacy."<sup>7</sup> Fabric was gathered at a central point below the main ceiling and radiated outward to the walls, ending in stenciled hanging panels. The walls were covered in ruched silk with intermittent vertical pleated panels. The amount of seating in the auditorium was dramatically reduced, as the fabric concealed the balcony and gallery, and much of the row seating on the main floor was converted into loges with armchairs and couches for seating. A grapelike cluster of balloon lights hung from the center of the ceiling and sprouted from the concealed loge, giving the theater "a light-hearted appearance."<sup>8</sup>

This is also most likely when the corridor at the rear of the theater was created. Photographs of the auditorium at the time of the theater's construction indicate that the Exchange Street lobby shared a wall with the rear of the auditorium. Plates of the Maxine Elliott Theatre in New York depict curtains partitioning this area off from the rest of the auditorium and is most likely the original configuration of the Shubert's auditorium. Now the rafters created the ceiling of a curved corridor with doorways at the two main aisles [See Figures 11 and 12].

Other photographs of this period show the newly created curved corridor filled with armchairs and settees like those in the auditorium's loges. The ceiling has been painted with a dark enamel paint, and the rafters and trim accentuated with metallic paint. A sign on the wall shared with the lobby reads "Ladies Lounge" [See Figure 18]. Another photograph from this time shows a redecorated lobby.

This corridor, along with the Exchange and Wabasha Street lobbies, received new coats of paint in keeping with the flamboyant Art Deco design. The walls of the Wabasha lobby displayed a zigzag pattern, diamond designs, high-gloss black enamel paint, and a diamond pattern of mirrors in the ceiling with a cluster of balloon lights hanging from its center that accentuated the coffered ceiling.

Upon taking over the World Theater in 1952, George Granstrom and Ted Mann modernized the interior to reflect mid-century tastes. Few photographs exist showing the interior at this time, but accounts of its appearance in the 1970s indicate that the Wabasha Street lobby had cheap wood and vinyl wall coverings. While the 1933 remodeling concealed both the balcony and the gallery with fabric draping, the 1952 remodeling blocked off the gallery with a false ceiling. The paneled loge was covered over with wood battens. Blue acoustic tile extended up the auditorium walls to the dropped ceiling. Again, the concrete construction of the World Theater worked to its advantage, as the concrete floors of the balcony, though

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<sup>6</sup> It is uncertain whether the air-conditioning system was installed at this time. Kooler-Aire Engineering Corporation, Air Conditioning System, Shubert Theater, October 3, 1930, and Liebenberg and Kaplan, drawing for Job M-893, September 22, 1931, drawing for Job 744, September 25, 1931, "World Theater" file, Northwest Architectural Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; World Theater photograph file, Minnesota Public Radio Archive, Saint Paul.

<sup>7</sup> World Theater advertisement, *Saint Paul Dispatch*, October 13, 1933.

<sup>8</sup> "World Theater Shows New Togs," *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, October 14, 1933.

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concealed by the false ceiling, were maintained. Liebenberg and Kaplan again designed a new sign and marquee for the Wabasha Street entrance.<sup>9</sup>

Beginning in 1984, Minnesota Public Radio began rehabilitating and restoring the theater. The suspended ceiling was removed, which reintroduced the concealed gallery into the auditorium space.<sup>10</sup> MPR commissioned the architectural firm Miller, Hanson, Westerbeck, and Bell to oversee the work. Conrad Schmitt Studios, an interior design firm “well known for its accurate and spirited restorations of older theaters across the country,” worked on the theater’s interior.<sup>11</sup>

The scope of the project was necessarily extensive to reverse more than fifty years of inappropriate alterations. Designers used original building plans and historic photographs as guidelines for the work, but at times they had to rely on conjecture when original material not depicted in historic sources was missing, such as in the reconstruction of the box seats. A clear rendering of the original plasterwork was unavailable, so designers placed intricate swirl designs on the face of the boxes based on Marshall and Fox’s original plans. To replace sections of missing decorations, molds were cast from existing plasterwork along the walls, ceiling, and proscenium and then installed piece by piece in other areas. Twenty-three-karat gold leaf highlighted the detail’s intricacies. The 1933 wall built between the corridor and the auditorium was maintained.<sup>12</sup>

The Wabasha Street lobby was permanently closed. This would mark the first time in the theater’s history that the Exchange Street doorways would be used as designed by Marshall and Fox. The reclaimed Exchange Street doorways were augmented by the construction of a glass entranceway “in the form of an oversized green house” and a new marquee. Some theatergoers, though, would enter through the same doorway that originally led from the Wabasha lobby, as part of that entryway had been converted into the new box office.<sup>13</sup>

Adjacent to the Shubert Theatre is the Shubert Building, a six-story reinforced-concrete and brick structure with a rectangular plan. The building is Italianate in form but with Beaux Arts Classicism detailing. The northwest and southwest primary facades are faced primarily in cream-colored, glazed terra cotta brick. The south end of the southwest wall was originally flush with a five-story sandstone building that has since been demolished. Sandstone pieces from that building are still attached to the Shubert Building’s south corner. The southeast wall is now edged by an alley. Like the northeast wall, it is made of common brick.

<sup>9</sup> Dave Kenney, *Twin Cities Picture Show*, 182; Patricia Weaver Francisco, “The World Is Back in Business,” *Minnesota Monthly* (May 1981): 10; Liebenberg and Kaplan, drawing for remodeling marquee and box office, August 10, 1954, “World Theater” file, Northwest Architectural Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

<sup>10</sup> Kenney, *Twin Cities Picture Show*, 182; “World Theater Usage,” undated manuscript from “Originals for World Theater” folder, Minnesota Public Radio Archive, Saint Paul; James Barron, “Jovial Radio Show Plans to Redo Its Old Theater,” *New York Times*, July 8, 1984.

<sup>11</sup> “World Theater Usage.”

<sup>12</sup> Lucille Johnsen Stelling, “Welcome to the New World,” *Saint Paul Skyway News*, April 23, 1986.

<sup>13</sup> Colin Covert, “Let’s Party for the Old World,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, April 25, 1986. At the time, it was wrongfully assumed that this was a reversion to the original use of the Exchange Street doorways. The *Skyway News* reported, “In another effort to re-create the original, the doors used when the building first opened in 1910 will serve again as the entrance. ‘When the theater was being used as a movie house, it opened on Wabasha. . . . But we’ve gone back to the original front doors, which haven’t been used since the 1930s.’” Stelling, “Welcome to the New World.”



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On the primary facades, the second floor has alternating stripes of smooth-faced, tan-color terra cotta tiles and terra cotta tiles with a flat egg-and-dart design. A dentilated, cornice-like belt course runs along the top of the second and fifth floors.

All of the building's windows on the second through sixth floors are one-over-one double-hung sash. There are eight bays, each holding three windows on the southwest facade and two on the northwest facade. On the third through fifth floors, the three windows of each bay are unified by a single terra cotta sill. On the third and fourth floor, each window is capped with a flat arch motif. On the central six bays of the Wabasha facade, these motifs are accented by the use of darker terra cotta tiles for the wall plane. Pilasters with Corinthian capitals divide these bays. Terra cotta ovals monogrammed with the letter "B" and trimmed with garlands flank the outer bays below the fifth-floor cornice and also appear at the same elevation on the corners of the northwest facade. The building has a prominent pressed metal cornice with modillions and dentilation.

While the upper stories are well preserved, the first floor has been modified. Some of the storefronts and entryways have been filled in with modern curtain-wall systems and smooth-faced concrete. An entry for the box office of the Fitzgerald Theater is on the northwest facade. The entry for the Fitzgerald Condominiums on the second through sixth floors is on the southwest facade.

The interior of the upper floors were converted to residential use several decades ago and to condominiums in 2005. In 2005, the Shubert Building was converted into the Fitzgerald Condominiums, adopting the contemporary name of the neighboring theater. The remodeling included designing eight units on each of the upper floors.<sup>14</sup> The building's concrete floors were exposed and refinished, and units were furnished with Murphy beds, giving the condominiums a "hard, urban-living feel."<sup>15</sup> The building's historic configuration and finishes are no longer intact.

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<sup>14</sup> *R. L. Polk's Saint Paul (Minnesota) City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1963), reverse section, 483; *Polk's Saint Paul (Ramsey County, Minn.) City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1965), reverse section, 441; Eric Dunnum, "'Prairie's' New Companion," *Villager*, August 24, 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Eric Dunnum, "'Prairie's' New Companion," *Saint Paul Villager*, August 24, 2005.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1910-1920

**Significant Dates**

1910

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Marshall, Benjamin H.

Fox, Charles E.

Buechner, Charles W.

Orth, Henry

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance begins with the opening of the Shubert in 1910 and ends with the Shubert's final season of regular theatrical performances in 1920. This is the period that the Shubert achieved significance for its association with entertainment—specifically, legitimate theater—in downtown Saint Paul. Although there was an attempt to re-establish a program of live performances in the theater in the fall of 1930, it did

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not meet with success. Three years later, the building underwent extensive remodeling to convert it into a movie theater.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

N/A

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

**CRITERION A**

The Sam S. Shubert Theatre, built in 1910, is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation as one of the premiere venues for legitimate theater in Saint Paul in that era. The theater was the product of a collaboration between the Shubert brothers, who established a chain of theaters across the county in the early twentieth century, and local businessman George Benz, who developed and owned the building and an adjacent office building. The office building provided a Wabasha Street address for the theater, which fronted on East Exchange Street. Wabasha was the spine of Saint Paul's growing theater district: the Crystal (later the Strand) Theater opened in 1906, the Palace (later the Orpheum) in 1916, and the New Astor (later the Riviera) in 1920. Of those theaters, only the Palace/Orpheum survives, and it was designed for vaudeville, a different form of entertainment than the traditional offerings of the Shubert.

The association with the Shubert organization brought nationally known acts to Saint Paul. At the same time, the theater was associated with the local Bainbridge Players, an important acting company that also performed in Minneapolis's Shubert Theatre, which opened on the same day as its Saint Paul counterpart.

The Saint Paul Shubert dates from the heyday of national syndicates of legitimate theater operators with associated touring companies. After World War I—particularly after the introduction of “talkies” in the 1920s—moving pictures usurped the popularity of both legitimate theater and vaudeville. Although plays were occasionally performed again at the Shubert before it was converted into a movie theater in 1933, its primary role as a home for legitimate theater ended with the 1919–1920 season, Buzz Bainbridge's last attempt to maintain regular performances. This marks the end of the Shubert's period of significance, which begins with the theater's opening in 1910.

**CRITERION C**

The Sam S. Shubert Theatre is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for exemplifying theater construction in the early twentieth century. Key historic design elements include the Beaux Arts facade, double balcony, proscenium stage, box seats, overall decor of the auditorium, and fireproof construction. Together, these and other features exhibit the state of the art for legitimate theater facilities in 1910. The Shubert was designed by a Chicago architectural firm, Marshall and Fox, that was very familiar with the latest trends, having played a leading role in developing them.

Only one other theater from this era survives in Saint Paul, the Palace/Orpheum, and it was designed to house vaudeville. The interior of the Minneapolis Shubert was severely damaged by a fire in 1941 and by roof failure in the 1990s, which destroyed most of the plasterwork. Although both Shuberts had two balconies, they were designed by different architects and the configuration of the auditoriums was different. The balconies in the Minneapolis Shubert were recently removed to make rehabilitation of that long-vacant property feasible,

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leaving the Saint Paul Shubert as the only example of an early twentieth-century two-balcony theater in the Twin Cities.

While the Saint Paul Shubert has experienced change over time, its overall historic character retains good integrity, thanks in part to a major restoration/rehabilitation in the 1980s. That effort returned the theater to close to its original appearance, with the assistance of original plans and descriptive accounts from the 1910s. Much of the building's original material remains intact.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

## **THE SHUBERT THEATRE**

### **The Mighty Syndicate**

Prior to the Civil War, most of America's population centers had local stock companies that performed a variety of shows at local theaters. As the country became more industrialized and the railroad system expanded, stock companies began to be replaced by the "combination system," in which actors performed roles in touring productions. Although local stock companies initially embraced the new system, oftentimes performing in plays with the visiting actors, the railroad made the movement of entire casts and props increasingly cost effective, a development that forced local theaters to compete for the traveling shows the public preferred. Soon stock companies looked comparatively rustic and fell out of fashion. Meanwhile, as new settlements grew into respectable cities, residents felt they would only truly "arrive" once a theater was built, a sentiment that consequently expanded audiences for traveling shows.<sup>16</sup>

The entire traveling show—actors, scenery, and staff—became the major commodity, and beginning in the 1870s, New York City, which had surpassed Philadelphia early in the century as America's theatrical capital, emerged as the epicenter of theater production. Competition and nationwide demand increased, and "a complex and confusing system of booking . . . developed and booking agencies became powerful businesses."<sup>17</sup> Booking systems known as "circuits" sent their representatives from New York to cooperating theaters around the country to promote shows and to recruit new facilities to come under their circuit's umbrella. The convenience of the booking profession quickly caused it to evolve from useful to monopolizing. Agents began to demand exclusivity from theater owners, and those who did not comply were blacklisted and forced out of business.<sup>18</sup>

By the end of the century, a group of men would take theater circuits to a new level, ultimately encouraging the development of theatrical empires and, eventually, the formation of actors' unions. In 1896, Abraham Lincoln Erlanger and Marc Klaw, who controlled attractions in the southern United States; Charles Frohman, who booked shows in the West; Al Hayman, an owner of the Empire Theater; and Sam Nixon and

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<sup>16</sup> Foster Hirsch, *The Boys from Syracuse: The Shuberts' Theatrical Empire* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998), 21; Thomas O. Andrus, "A History of the Legitimate Theater in St. Paul, Minnesota from 1918 to 1939" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Minnesota, January 1960), 14; Craig Morrison, *Theatres* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 19.

<sup>17</sup> Morrison, *Theatres*, 19; Susan Granger and Kay Grossman, "Sam S. Shubert Theatre, Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota," 1995, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, available at the State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, 8-12.

<sup>18</sup> Granger and Grossman, "Sam S. Shubert Theatre," 8-12; Morrison, *Theatres*, 20.

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J. Fred Zimmerman, who ran numerous prominent theaters in Philadelphia, met at a luncheon at the Holland House in New York. “These men naturally discussed the chaos in the theatrical business . . . [and] decided that its only economic hope was in a centralization of booking interests.” Within the next few weeks, the men consolidated the theaters under their control, forming a national chain that allowed managers to tour their companies economically. “In a word, booking suddenly became standardized” under the famous Theatrical Syndicate.<sup>19</sup>

While this move streamlined the booking process, the Syndicate soon controlled seven hundred theaters across the country and put most of its competition out of business. Colgate Baker, writing years later for the Shuberts’ *New York Review*, explained why the Syndicate’s system allowed it to dominate the national theater scene so quickly: “A play, no matter how successful in New York, if it is to make any money on the road, must have its tour booked so that a performance can be given every evening . . . [and] play in the smaller towns between [major cities] to pay your hauling charges. The Syndicate, either by leasehold or by promises to the local theatre managers to give them an uninterrupted season of attractions, rapidly controlled the approaches to the big cities . . . and thus it controlled the theatrical situation in America.”<sup>20</sup> The Syndicate became notorious for its strong-arm policy with independent theaters, but it was unaware that the Shubert brothers, managers of one of its cooperating theaters in New York City, would soon become its greatest competitor.

### **The Rise of the Shuberts**

The early years of the Shubert brothers have taken on an almost mythical air. Although the *New York Times* obituaries of all three Shubert brothers give their birthplace as Syracuse, New York, biographers believe the Shubert children spent their early childhood in the Poland-Lithuania borderlands. The oldest son, Levi, was born around 1875, Samuel S. came two years later, and Jacob J. was born between 1879 and 1880.<sup>21</sup> The family’s last name was originally Szemanski, but it is possible that, upon their arrival in America, the family’s city of origin—Shervient—may have been mistaken as their surname before being corrupted into the more pronounceable “Shubart.” It appears that their father, David, came to America around 1881 and was followed soon after by his family.<sup>22</sup>

The lack of concrete facts surrounding the brothers’ early years was most likely a product of the Shubert publicity machine. For their entire adult lives, the brothers distanced themselves publicly from their Jewish heritage and their impoverished childhood. Hence, Levi, Samuel, and Jacob J. became Lee, Sam, and J. J. This choice was partly made to broaden their appeal with audiences and to compete with other promoters, but it also removed them from their shiftless, alcoholic father. David Shubart was devoutly religious but did

<sup>19</sup> Isaac F. Marcossan and Daniel Frohman, *Charles Frohman: Manager and Man* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1916), 185–186.

<sup>20</sup> Brooks McNamara, *The Shuberts of Broadway: A History Drawn from the Collections of the Shubert Archive* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 13–14.

<sup>21</sup> The Shubert brothers were diminutive and had “baby faces”—traits they used to enhance their achievements. For example, in regards to securing Richard Mansfield to star at their theater, Lee credited Sam, “a boy not yet twenty years of age,” with the accomplishment. Sam was actually twenty-three and had been involved in theater for more than a decade (McNamara, *The Shuberts of Broadway*, 11).

<sup>22</sup> Lee and J. J.’s *New York Times* obituaries give the brothers’ birthdays as March 15, 1875, and August 15, 1880, respectively, citing *Who’s Who in the Theatre* as the source for the birthdates. “Sam S. Shubert Dies a Victim of the Wreck,” *New York Times*, May 13, 1905; “Lee Shubert Dies in Hospital; Long Ruled Theatre Empire,” *New York Times*, December 26, 1953; “J. J. Shubert Dies; Last of 3 Brothers,” *New York Times*, December 27, 1963; McNamara, *The Shuberts of Broadway*, 5; Jerry Stagg, *The Brothers Shubert* (New York: Random House, 1968), 5.

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not work steadily, believing that God would provide whatever the family needed. Thus, his children grew up in abject poverty and shame. David took Lee out of school at the age of ten so that he could accompany his father in peddling work, and the two younger brothers soon were made to follow suit. As a result, they received very little education.<sup>23</sup>

It was the middle brother, Sam, whose industriousness and work experience would set the family on the path to theatrical success. Like the rest of his childhood, the facts regarding Sam's introduction to the theater are shrouded in mystery. One version of the account has him working outside the Grand Opera House as a shoeshine boy. On a particularly cold day, the manager took pity on the boy and allowed him to sit inside the theater. Even though the show was an amateurish local production, Sam was mesmerized. He may also have been introduced to the theater through a job passing out programs for the opera house. However it came to be, Sam soon worked in the box office of the house, and by the end of 1888, he was assistant treasurer. The Weiting Theater, the premier theater in Syracuse, fell into the possession of Mrs. John Weiting after the death of her husband, and in 1891, she employed Sam as the Weiting's house manager. Sam, in turn, hired Lee to oversee the ushers in the balcony.<sup>24</sup>

Sam's first taste of theatrical production came around 1897 while working at the Weiting. Again, two different accounts from the Shubert family are given. Both revolve around a play called *A Texas Steer* by now-forgotten playwright Charles Hoyt. In both accounts, Sam's charisma, determination, and business savvy convinced the playwright to allow him to produce the play, which was either about to be retired by Hoyt or needed an extension of its rights to have any further performances at the Weiting. Sam planned a tour of the production to theaters in Syracuse, Utica, Troy, and Albany, New York, funded with other people's money. Historian Robert Grau described Sam as "an electric battery when set in motion, a veritable bundle of nerves, and his marvelous energy attracted the attention of several gentlemen in the mercantile line who were glad of the opportunity to invest their capital with so competent and pushing a manipulator."<sup>25</sup> Securing outside funds was unheard of that time, and Sam's innovation would eventually change theater history.<sup>26</sup>

Sam's "restless imagination quickly envisioned a chain of playhouses and productions of his own,"<sup>27</sup> and he turned his attention to the untapped theatrical resources to be found in New York City. Sam and Lee left Syracuse in 1900, while J. J. stayed to manage the upstate theaters. The first theater under Sam's control was the Herald Square Theatre at the northwest corner of Broadway and Thirty-fifth Street. The brothers were small fishes in a big pond, but Sam's "direct and convincing manner"<sup>28</sup> soon helped them land a big fish when they convinced the renowned stage actor Richard Mansfield to appear at Herald Square for a long-run engagement. Sam and Lee also signed on with the Theatrical Syndicate, turning their theater into an affiliated house.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Hirsch, *The Boys from Syracuse*, 10; McNamara, *The Brothers Shubert*, 5–7.

<sup>24</sup> Hirsch, *The Boys from Syracuse*, 16–17.

<sup>25</sup> McNamara, *The Shuberts of Broadway*, 6, 8.

<sup>26</sup> Hirsch, *The Boys from Syracuse*, 18. According to Shubert family history, a stagehand working on this production ran out of the letter "A" for the marquee and was forced to write "Samuel Shubert Presents." The family name of Shubart became Shubert, and the new spelling stuck.

<sup>27</sup> McNamara, *The Shuberts of Broadway*, 6.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 11; Stagg, *The Brothers Shubert*, 26–28.

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When Sam accepted the Syndicate's productions and acquiesced to its demands, he was, as Lee put it, "tolerated as long as he stayed in line and let the Syndicate do his bookings and paid the Syndicate price."<sup>30</sup> The Syndicate gave Sam little regard until the success of his independent productions started to bring him accolades. This infuriated the Syndicate. In August 1903, A. L. Erlanger told the Shuberts, after they broke a booking engagement, that they were finished in the theater business. Erlanger retaliated by telling the managers of Syndicate theaters that they would be blacklisted if they attempted to do business with the Shuberts. The Shuberts capitalistically replied that competition created good business and better productions, and they demanded an "open-door policy." They went on to form Sam S. and Lee Shubert, Incorporated with capital of \$1,400,000. During the next two years, the Shuberts leased prestigious theaters in Buffalo, Brooklyn, Baltimore, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Chattanooga, and New Orleans. If adequate theaters were not available, the Shuberts built new ones, again with the assistance of outside funding. By the beginning of the 1904–1905 theater season, fifty theaters composed the burgeoning Shubert empire.<sup>31</sup>

On May 10, 1905, while Lee was in London opening their first European theater, Sam made a last-minute decision to hop a train to Pittsburgh, where he was trying to secure the Duquesne Theater. Sometime before 2:00 a.m. the morning of the eleventh, his train collided with the ammunition car of an army transport train heading east. The explosion tore open the side of the Pullman in which Sam slept. The force ruptured a line running along the carriage, and the escaping steam burned Sam over half of his body. He was rescued from the train and was well enough to call newspapers from his hotel early the next morning. He sent a telegraph to his family assuring them that he was fine, but the following afternoon, Sam succumbed to his injuries.<sup>32</sup>

New York's theater world responded with shock. His obituary in the *New York Times* mused that "his career was looked upon as phenomenal, considering his youth."<sup>33</sup> The tragedy threw the Shubert family into deep mourning and the Shubert empire into potential chaos. Sam had always been the charismatic leader and visionary, "the driving force behind the rapid Shubert expansion in the early years of the century. Lee seemed content at the time to follow his brother's lead, and J. J., truculent and unpredictable, was relegated mostly to handling out-of-town matters and to a less than full partnership in the growing company."<sup>34</sup> Lee superstitiously saw Sam's death as a sign and concluded that it left him no choice but to continue on with J. J. as a partner.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>30</sup> McNamara, *The Shuberts of Broadway*, 22.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 22, 25–26; Hirsch, *The Boys from Syracuse*, 45.

<sup>32</sup> Hirsch, *The Boys from Syracuse*, 48–49; Stagg, *The Brothers Shubert*, 65.

<sup>33</sup> "Sam S. Shubert Dies a Victim of the Wreck," *New York Times*, May 13, 1905.

<sup>34</sup> McNamara, *The Shuberts of Broadway*, 17.

<sup>35</sup> Hirsch, *The Boys from Syracuse*, 69–70.

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### **A Changing of the Guards**

Before his death, Sam Shubert had fought the Syndicate blacklisting by securing the farewell American tour of French actress Sarah Bernhardt for the 1905–1906 season. Sam encouraged Bernhardt to support his crusade against the tyranny of the Syndicate by appealing to her antiroyalist leanings. Erlanger fought back by barring her appearance at any Syndicate theater. After Sam's death, Lee took the reins, refusing to allow the tour to go under. He countered the lack of rentable theaters by setting up in every town that denied use of a theater a tent he borrowed from the Barnum and Bailey Circus. Not only did this strategy draw attention, but the tent held three times as many people as a typical theater and, consequently, multiplied profits.<sup>36</sup>

After Sam's death, the Syndicate succeeded in villainizing itself with its own anti-Shubert machinations. In response to the shutout, Lee and J. J. created the Society of Independent Managers, an anti-Syndicate group. The machine of public relations played up the David-and-Goliath image with overtures of Sam's untimely death. Soon the six Syndicate members found themselves before a New York grand jury with an indictment accusing them of conspiracy to restrain trade. Lee testified at the hearings. Ironically, Lee and J. J. were able to undermine the power of the Syndicate, but as their empire grew, many accused them of surpassing the Syndicate's ability to strong-arm and exploit actors, theater owners, and investors.<sup>37</sup>

### **The Shuberts Bring Entertainment to the Twin Cities**

Lee and J. J. made sure Sam's legacy lived on in a way that can be interpreted as either a loving tribute or a clever marketing scheme. "One of Lee's shrewdest maneuvers immediately following Sam's death was the way he exploited Sam's memory. Suppressing whatever private anger he felt about his younger brother's high-handed autocratic treatment of him, he began at once to make Sam an idol he worshipped for the next fifty years."<sup>38</sup> The most prominent way that Lee idolized his brother was to commission the construction of theaters drawn to his specifications and then to name them after his brother. The first of the Sam S. Shubert Memorial Theatres opened in 1906 in Kansas City, Missouri. Lee soon discovered that use of the term "memorial" in a theater cast a funereal pall over an otherwise festive building. The word was dropped, and as their numbers increased, all of the Sam S. Shubert Theatres were known simply as the "Shuberts."<sup>39</sup> Saint Paul would be one of only seven cities to be home to a Shubert.

George G. Benz Jr. would become a key figure in the story of the Shuberts in the Twin Cities. The Benz family was well known in Saint Paul. Benz's father, George G. Benz Sr., was born in Osthofen, Germany, in 1838. He attended both public and private schools before immigrating to the United States in 1854, living first in Chicago before moving to Saint Paul. In 1862, he opened the United States Billiard Hall and Restaurant. After selling the establishment, he went into the liquor business with partner F. A. Renz. Renz later sold his share of the interest to Major J. C. Becht. The firm became Benz and Becht in 1878, George Benz and Company in 1881, and finally, George Benz and Sons in 1887. The company was successful, holding stores in Saint Paul, an office in Louisville, Kentucky, and a distillery in Eminence, Kentucky.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 47-48; Stagg, *The Brothers Shubert*, 75-76.

<sup>37</sup> McNamara, *The Shuberts of Broadway*, 41-42; Andrus, "A History of the Legitimate Theater in St. Paul," 95.

<sup>38</sup> Hirsch, *The Boys from Syracuse*, 51.

<sup>39</sup> "Shubert Memorial Theatre Opened," *New York Times*, October 2, 1906; Stagg, *The Brothers Shubert*, 82-83, 103.

<sup>40</sup> Henry A. Castle, *History of St. Paul and Vicinity* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1912), 3:906; Mark Fitzpatrick, "Forgotten Facts about St. Paul," *Saint Paul Shopping News*, November 8, 1950; "George G. Benz, St. Paul Leader, Dies on Train," *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, July 15, 1924.



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Benz Sr. also involved himself in local politics and social circles, serving three terms in the state legislature and on the school board and holding memberships in the Minnesota Club, the Commercial Club, Sons of Hermann, and the Masons. An important figure in young Saint Paul, he involved himself in the construction of many of the city's early buildings. His son and namesake, George Jr., took over Benz and Sons upon George Sr.'s death in 1908.<sup>41</sup>

George Jr. seemed destined to follow in his father's footsteps. Like his father, he was well educated, attending Saint Paul's public school before studying abroad in Wiesbaden, Germany, and at the University of Zurich, where he received the degree of doctor of philosophy in 1882. By the following year, Charles Cooper and Company of Newark, New Jersey, had employed him as a chemist. He later worked in the same capacity for W. H. Schieffelin and Company of New York. He returned to his hometown of Saint Paul in 1884 and joined the family business. Like his father, he involved himself in various social clubs, and in 1894, he married Josephine Hamm, a member of the well-to-do brewing family.<sup>42</sup>

Benz had not been long at the helm of Benz and Sons before the Shubert Theater prospect came on the horizon. In early February 1907, the Shuberts began talks with real estate man E. G. Walton about building a theater in Minneapolis on land Walton owned at Ninth Street and Nicollet. Walton believed that with the cooperation of Minneapolis's public, the theater could soon be built. In typical Shubert fashion, Walton hoped to secure financing from local capitalists.<sup>43</sup> Suddenly, the Shuberts withdrew their interest. Walton lamented, "It rather looks as though they were playing horse with us. I certainly am at a loss to understand their business methods."<sup>44</sup> The Shuberts had also been in discussion with Fred Chute regarding putting a theater on the east side of the Mississippi River. Chute said that the Shuberts wanted locals to secure all the funding for the theater, and since that was unlikely, the Shuberts would probably "stay out."<sup>45</sup>

Things were quiet for the next two years. In May 1909, the *Minneapolis Tribune* speculated that the Shuberts were planning a "Twin City Invasion." J. J. Shubert was in town and had met with W. W. Witting, manager of the Lyric Theater in Minneapolis. When a reporter asked if the Shuberts were contemplating entering the Twin Cities' theatrical field, J. J. gave no comment.<sup>46</sup>

Two days later, he lifted his veil of silence, his words underscoring the monopolizing spirit that governed the family's empire: "I believe that two circuits can exist in such cities as Chicago and Philadelphia, but in cities of the size of Minneapolis I feel confident that the play-goers are not numerous enough to make the business of two first-class theaters profitable." He continued: "There is no truth in the statement that I am to take over the Lyric theater. . . . What I want is a new theater, and we will have one in Minneapolis and one in St. Paul by November 1."<sup>47</sup> In fact, the Lyric would only serve as a stopgap—a way to introduce the Twin Cities' theatergoing public to Shubert productions until the desired new theaters were constructed.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> "May Build Theater for the Shuberts," *Minneapolis Tribune*, February 1, 1907; "Managers Say New Theater is Coming," *Minneapolis Tribune*, February 9, 1907.

<sup>44</sup> "Believes Shuberts Biding Their Time," *Minneapolis Tribune*, March 14, 1907.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> "Shuberts Planning Twin City Invasion," *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 2, 1909.

<sup>47</sup> "Shuberts Won't Take the Lyric," *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 4, 1909.

<sup>48</sup> Kenney, *Twin Cities Picture Show*, 22.

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Little did the population of the Twin Cities know that as the Shuberts discussed their theater wishes in a public forum, the ball to make their plan come to fruition had been rolling for quite a while. A collection of private correspondence in the Shubert Archive in New York dating from spring and summer 1909 documents the early negotiations leading to the Saint Paul Shubert Theatre's construction.

In an April 2, 1909 memo to Lee Shubert, Herbert Duce, manager of the Garrick Theater in Chicago, seems to indicate that he had been negotiating with Minneapolis and Saint Paul interests: "St. Paul men here [*sic*] about theatre deal in St. Paul and offer ten year lease for houses to be built and ready by September." He goes on to say that rental for the Saint Paul Theater would be \$12,500 while rental in Minneapolis was higher—\$15,000 to \$17,500. He warned Lee that "Scott of Metropolitan [Theater] has been advised to block any move by the Shuberts."<sup>49</sup>

Three days later, Duce met with Benz and unnamed architects. The site that would eventually hold the Shubert was already under discussion as well as the work of "New York architects."<sup>50</sup> According to Duce, Benz "arranged satisfactory terms with Mr. James Neill."<sup>51</sup>

It appears that all parties involved went to great lengths to keep the details of the Saint Paul Shubert under wraps for as long as possible. When Benz was interviewed by reporters, he said the property was under option to two parties whom he did not name. A letter written by Benjamin Beardsley, the real estate agent who negotiated for the construction of both of the Twin Cities Shuberts,<sup>52</sup> identified the parties as himself and James Neill. Beardsley expressed concern that Buechner and Orth, the local architects with whom Benz insisted on working, were not theater architects.<sup>53</sup> Beardsley encouraged Duce to discuss "the peculiar shape and space of the Benz tract," continuing that "it would be too bad to have the architects turn down the Benz piece as it would be hard to secure as good a landlord with the influence [Benz] has."<sup>54</sup>

It was not long, though, before the architect situation grew tense. Marshall and Fox of Chicago were in line to design Saint Paul's Shubert Theater, but as Beardsley put it, Benz "could not throw down his architect." Beardsley, apparently under the impression that Marshall and Fox would draft not only the Shubert Theater but also the commercial building Benz intended to sit at the theater's west side, asked Marshall and Fox to prepare a sketch in which they could "indicate, not perhaps by suggestion, but rather to balance and go with the theater building that you trust with the Wabasha St. and Exchange St. front, say three stories high, and so far as ground plan goes, indicate excavation under the building on the two fronts, and considering the future of the property, the excavation should be made now under the sidewalk, as ultimately the space will be valuable." He diplomatically continued that the "architect who serves the Shuberts must of necessity,

<sup>49</sup> Herbert Duce to Lee Shubert, April 2, 1909, Saint Paul Shubert Correspondence File, Shubert Archive, New York.

<sup>50</sup> Letter from Benjamin F. Beardsley to Herbert Duce, April 5, 1909, Saint Paul Shubert Correspondence File, Shubert Archive, New York.

<sup>51</sup> Letter from Benjamin Beardsley to Herbert Duce, April 9, 1909, Saint Paul Shubert Correspondence File, Shubert Archive, New York. Neill is later identified as a member of the James Neill Stock Company who is looking for a permanent lease on a new theater in Saint Paul.

<sup>52</sup> "Shubert Theater Site Announced," *Saint Paul Dispatch*, May 22, 1909.

<sup>53</sup> Letters from Benjamin Beardsley to Herbert Duce, April 14, 1909, Saint Paul Shubert Correspondence File, Shubert Archive, New York.

<sup>54</sup> Letter from Benjamin Beardsley to Herbert Duce, April 15, 1909, Saint Paul Shubert Correspondence File, Shubert Archive, New York.

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serve well the owner, and that it cannot well be a divided work. The architect of the theater must, of necessity, be the architect for the whole improvement.”<sup>55</sup>

Although Marshall and Fox boasted nationwide prestige and had a project history with the Shuberts, Benz insisted on using Buechner and Orth. Beardsley explained Benz’s reasoning: “Because of his position in supplying the local retail trade, who are all allied to ‘holler’ for the town and build up the town, Mr. Benz is conscious that he must, of necessity, employ a local architect, or appear to do so. . . . I am satisfied that Mr. Benz will be agreeable and pleased if the Shuberts’ architects are retained, provided said architects can associate the name of the local concern in some capacity, so as to frighten off this bug-a-boo of going outside and discriminating against the local man.”<sup>56</sup>

When the news of the theater went public in May, the *Saint Paul Dispatch* printed a photograph of Saint Peter Street as seen from Fourth Street, calling it “Saint Paul’s New Theater Row.” Senator J. M. Hackney had recently acquired the property, and the *Dispatch* speculated that this would be the new location of the Shubert. An article the following day, although casually mentioning the purchase of land by Benz at Wabasha and Exchange Streets, reiterated that the new theater would be constructed at the northwest corner of Fourth and Saint Peter Streets. The following day, Beardsley corresponded with J. J. Shubert, hashing out the details of a completed two-year bond and rent deal between Benz and the Shuberts that had been completed. Benz was to take possession of the property on May 17 and would immediately begin work toward the buildings’ construction. The *Dispatch* continued with its belief that the theater would sit at Fourth and Saint Peter, noting that C. F. Rutherford claimed to have a lease on the property.<sup>57</sup> Meanwhile, the *Minneapolis Tribune* reported that the Shuberts had purchased property in the vicinity of Market and Fourth Streets, but they were “also negotiating for another site which they believe more advantageous.”<sup>58</sup>

By May 11, Benz and the Shuberts had come to an agreement about the lease and had signed the relevant paperwork. Benz, though, awaited a decision on the architect situation, as he was chomping at the bit to begin demolition of Saint Louis Catholic Church, which sat on the site.<sup>59</sup> Three days before he was to take possession of the property, Benz still needed resolution among the architects, and he was even willing to send Buchner to Chicago to meet with Marshall and Fox. In a letter to Herbert Duce, Beardsley repeated that Benz had “to be politic with the retail trade of the city, and patronize, or appear to do so, to the best of his ability, the home talent.”<sup>60</sup>

Nevertheless, Charles Fox would not compromise. He wrote Benz directly and stated that it was not the policy of his firm to enter into associations with other architects, explaining that “on the few occasions we have done this, both the owner and the work [have] suffered through a divided responsibility.” Marshall and

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<sup>55</sup> Letter from Beardsley to Messrs. Marshall and Fox, April 19, 1909, Saint Paul Shubert Correspondence File, Shubert Archive, New York.

<sup>56</sup> Letters from Beardsley to Herman Frank, April 27, 1909, Saint Paul Shubert Correspondence File, Shubert Archive, New York.

<sup>57</sup> “St. Paul’s New Theater Row,” *Saint Paul Dispatch*, May 3, 1909; “Site for Shubert House Now Known,” *Saint Paul Dispatch*, May 4, 1909; “Shuberts Won’t Take the Lyric,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 4, 1909; letter from Beardsley to Jacob J. Shubert, copy to Herbert Duce, May 5, 1909, letter from Beardsley to Jacob J. Shubert, May 8, 1909, Saint Paul Shubert Correspondence File, Shubert Archive, New York; “Shubert Halted by Lease Trouble,” *Saint Paul Dispatch*, May 6, 1909.

<sup>58</sup> “Shubert Theater on Fifth Street Site,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 9, 1909.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from Beardsley to Herman Frank, May 11, 1909, Saint Paul Shubert Correspondence File, Shubert Archive, New York; Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Saint Paul, Minnesota, 1903–1904, volume 4, sheet 451.

<sup>60</sup> Letter from Beardsley to Herbert Duce, May 14, 1909, Saint Paul Shubert Correspondence File, Shubert Archive, New York.

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Fox agreed to send drawings and specifications but would not be held responsible for shoddy workmanship due to a lack of adherence to the plans. They also charged 5 percent of the total cost as their fee.<sup>61</sup> J. J. Shubert appeared to respect Benz's business savvy and said that if Marshall and Fox did not comply with Benz's arrangement and if they did not share their fee with Buechner and Orth, he would give the job to William Swasey, architect of the Minneapolis Shubert.<sup>62</sup>

All parties reached an agreement, and Beardsley sent out a press release to publicize the new construction at Wabasha and Exchange Streets. It stated that Buechner and Orth would superintend the construction of both buildings. It also indicated that the decision to route the main lobby through the commercial building was made early in the planning process: "The theater portion of the building, as is the general rule throughout the country, will occupy the rear portion of the property, with a commercial building on the Wabasha St. front, with ample arcade entrance into the theatre from both Wabasha and Exchange Sts." The Messrs. Benz were commended for "their public spirit in securing such a good corner affording convenient access by the patrons from all parts of the city."<sup>63</sup>

The August 7, 1909, the *Improvement Bulletin* reiterated Buechner and Orth's role as supervising architects of the Shubert. The contractors now had copies of the plans and were ready to proceed. A building permit taken out on November 13 showed that a 78' by 127'-6" theater would be constructed at a cost of \$100,000 on lots 4, 5, and 6 of Bazille and Guerin's Addition to Saint Paul Proper.<sup>64</sup>

Construction continued on the Shubert theaters in 1910 in Saint Paul, Minneapolis, and elsewhere. In March, the Shuberts decided to build twelve new theaters in large cities along the Pacific Coast, "thereby completing the chain of Shubert theatres stretching from coast to coast."<sup>65</sup>

### Architecture

Over the course of the nineteenth century, theater design evolved from utilitarian to ornate with the rise of the middle class and its members' expendable incomes. "As the century entered its last decade America's theaters were set to enter a period of unprecedented elegance. The raffishness of earlier decades, if not completely repressed, had been swept away from direct contact. Box seats . . . became places from which people of society . . . could display themselves and their finery."<sup>66</sup>

The Shuberts seemed to prefer new theaters, and 1908 saw the creation by Benjamin Marshall of what would become the prototype for the Saint Paul Shubert. In April 1908, actress Maxine Elliott and the Shuberts collaborated to construct a theater on Thirty-ninth Street between Sixth Avenue and Broadway in

<sup>61</sup> Herman Benz was George's Benz brother and part of George Benz and Sons. Letter from Charles E. Fox to Herman Benz, May 15, 1909, Saint Paul Shubert Correspondence File, Shubert Archive, New York.

<sup>62</sup> Letters from Beardsley to Herbert Duce and J. J. Shubert, May 15, 1909; telegram from Beardsley to Shubert, May 17, 1909; telegram from Shubert to Beardsley, May 17, 1909; from Shubert to Charles Fox, May 18, 1909, Saint Paul Shubert Correspondence File, Shubert Archive, New York.

<sup>63</sup> Benjamin F. Beardsley, undated press release, Saint Paul Shubert Correspondence File, Shubert Archive, New York.

<sup>64</sup> *Improvement Bulletin*, August 7, 1909 (Minneapolis: Chapin Publications, 1909), 22; *Improvement Bulletin*, November 6, 1909 (Minneapolis: Chapin Publications, 1909), 19; *Improvement Bulletin*, February 5, 1910 (Minneapolis: Chapin Publications, 1910), 24; *Improvement Bulletin*, March 5, 1910 (Minneapolis: Chapin Publications, 1910), 23; Saint Paul, Minn., Building Permit No. 53652, November 13, 1909; Building Permit No. 54019, February 26, 1910.

<sup>65</sup> "12 New Shubert Theatres," *New York Times*, March 8, 1910.

<sup>66</sup> Morrison, *Theatres*, 18.

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New York City. The small Beaux Arts theater would serve as an instant and eternal venue for Elliott when she performed in the city.<sup>67</sup>

Marshall and Fox designed the exterior of Saint Paul's Shubert in the refined Beaux Arts Classicism style, but the interior, completed by Saint Paul decorators Bazille and Partridge, was indulgently Rococo, or, as it was called at the time "Louis XVI." The playbill for the theater's opening night called the theater's design "Louis XVI French Architecture, pure pattern throughout." The interior included "ivory white walls and ceiling . . . the slight touch of gold in the trim and gold finished doors, together with the American beauty red hangings, furnishings, and carpets, and beautiful relief plaster and the beautiful French Louis XVI, gold finished lighting fixtures."<sup>68</sup> Mirrored tiles on the doors appear to reference the Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles.

The ornate plaster designs and gilding were especially apparent on the eight box seats and the square proscenium, but the "old rose decorations on the interior . . . [were] not elaborate, the subdued, conservative tones [blend] in harmony with the simple lines of the architecture." The theater also boasted rose-colored upholstery on the mahogany seats and "tasty curtains on the boxes."<sup>69</sup>

Carpets were "smouldering old rose" in color and were stretched over heavy padding to muffle the sound of footsteps during a performance. The lobbies on Wabasha and Exchange streets were accentuated with "tastefully hung" draperies to "relieve the monotony of the white walls." Metal fixtures were of romanized brass, and lighting included tungsten burners grouped beneath upright gas jets."<sup>70</sup>

Marshall and Fox's plans for the theater specify elements that are not mentioned in the newspaper reports. The lack of photographs showing the original interior of the theater also raises questions as to how strictly supervising architects Buechner and Orth adhered to some of the architectural details. The plans show that both the Wabasha and Exchange Street lobbies were to be finished in marble wainscoting and have marble floors. The elegant and costly lobbies would have been prominent features of the luxurious theater. Because the account in the *Daily News* refers to the walls as white and monotonous, most likely they were simply plastered. A photograph showing the lobby in 1933 depicts the walls painted and the floors carpeted, which underscores the probability that they were never marble.<sup>71</sup>

It seems that even as Marshall and Fox realized that the main lobby would be on Wabasha Street, it was the intent of their design to have the Exchange Street lobby also serve as an entrance. The plans show the lobby divided into three rooms. The easternmost room included the northeast stair and the nearby doorway. The room does not connect to the auditorium and is labeled "Balcony Stairway." The central three doorways enter into a lobby, which has three doorways leading directly to the auditorium. The westernmost room includes the northwest stair and was called the "Gallery Entrance." It included a "Gallery Ticket Office," and a private office that blocked direct access to the auditorium. It appears that the architects intended, at the

<sup>67</sup> McNamara, *The Shuberts of Broadway*, 43-44; "New Theatre Here for Maxine Elliott," *New York Times*, April 26, 1908; "Maxine Elliott Swings Pick," *New York Times*, May 27, 1908.

<sup>68</sup> Playbill for *The Fourth Estate*, August 31, 1910, Shubert Theatre, Saint Paul, 4.

<sup>69</sup> Day, "Sam S. Shubert Theatre Ready to Open." These contemporary descriptions, as well as Marshall and Fox's original plans for the building, served as guides for the restoration/rehabilitation that was undertaken in the 1980s.

<sup>70</sup> Fleming, "An Honest Reporter Defeats Corruption."

<sup>71</sup> Marshall and Fox, "Shubert Theatre," Architectural Plans, July 24, 1909, Northwest Architectural Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; Day, "Sam S. Shubert Theater Ready to Open."

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very least, for those in the cheapest seats to use the Exchange Street lobby. It is uncertain whether Buechner and Orth partitioned the lobby. The reference to the doorways as “Exchange Place Exits” in the Day article, which essentially introduced the populace to the theater, seems to indicate that it would not be used as an entrance and, consequently, was not divided into three rooms.<sup>72</sup>

The plans also show the front facade having box-shaped cast iron light fixtures between each doorway and triangular lanterns along the roofline. Photographs from the theater’s early years depict other lamps in place along the front facade and nothing along the roofline.

Also key to the design of the Saint Paul Shubert was its fireproof design. John Day, writing for the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, described the city’s new Shubert a “new temple of amusement” and an “insurance against nervousness.” Day highlighted the concrete and steel construction along with the numerous exits.<sup>73</sup> Unfortunately, fires were a common occurrence in theaters at the turn of the century. In the Twin Cities, “theaters . . . burned with discouraging regularity and not the least hazard of theatergoing was the danger of fire in highly combustible buildings.”<sup>74</sup> The combination of wood chairs, balconies, and partitions with oil lamps and flammable curtains, ropes, and scenery made of wood and painted fabric, was highly conducive to the rapid spread of fire in a contained space.<sup>75</sup>

In the backs of many patrons’ minds was undoubtedly the tragedy at Chicago’s Iroquois Theater on December 30, 1903. The theater had been open for less than a month when, during a matinee performance of *Mr. Bluebeard* with Eddie Foy, a fire started on the stage. The crew attempted to lower the asbestos curtain, but it got caught on the wire that was part of an acrobatic act. Opening the doors at the rear of the stage created a fireball that flew out over the audience. A mass panic ensued, and the exits became congested. Nearly six hundred people died from smoke inhalation, suffocation, or being crushed to death. The architect of the theater was none other than Benjamin Marshall.<sup>76</sup> When asked about the incident, he replied, “Every means was taken to prevent such a horror. The exits were more ample than are usually planned for such buildings.” He continued, “I can not understand why people did not go out at the various exits except it was because the house was new and the people were not familiar with the fire exits and everybody rushed to the entrances at which they came in.” He vowed never to build another theater where any wood was used.<sup>77</sup>

The Shuberts also resolved to make their theaters as safe as possible, demanding that they be “masonry fortresses.”<sup>78</sup> The Saint Paul Shubert was advertised as the city’s first fireproof theater and included fire-resistant fabrics, asbestos curtains, treated wood, and wide aisles.<sup>79</sup> Day’s *Pioneer Press* article also noted that in case of a fire, the entire theater could be evacuated in two minutes without crowding or rushing because of its numerous exits for the audience, those on stage, and those behind the scenes. Heating for the theater took place offsite, so there was also no chance of an exploding or burning boiler starting a fire. The

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> John Day, “Sam S. Shubert Theater Ready to Open,” *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, August 27, 1910.

<sup>74</sup> Granger and Grossman, “Sam S. Shubert Theatre,” 8-8.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> “564 Die in Iroquois Theatre” and “Wire Held Curtain,” *Decatur (Ill.) Daily Review*, December 31, 1903.

<sup>77</sup> “Theater’s Architect Talks,” *New York Times*, December 31, 1903.

<sup>78</sup> Granger and Grossman, “Sam S. Shubert Theatre,” 8-8

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.; Allyn G. Fleming, “An Honest Reporter Defeats Corruption,” *Saint Paul Daily News*, August 28, 1910; Day, “Sam S. Shubert Theater Ready to Open.”

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extra safety appliances included in the theater raised the cost by \$65,000, but the “Shuberts and Benz determined nothing should be left undone.”<sup>80</sup>

The *Saint Paul Daily News* also emphasized that “safety and comfort [were] paramount” in the theater’s design and were the priority of George Benz and Company when they “contemplated the new Shubert.” Both Benz and the Shuberts were “determined that the theater should be the handsomest, the most safe . . . in the Northwest. In this they have succeeded beyond a shadow of a doubt.”<sup>81</sup>

Because Benz had routed the entrance lobby from the theater, which fronted onto East Exchange, through his Shubert Building to the marquee that faced onto Wabasha Street, the design left him with five unused entrances on the theater’s ornate northeast facade. Early in the construction process, these exits were touted as “a typical theater front on Exchange Street, with ample marquise, thus providing especially good facilities for carriage patrons.”<sup>82</sup> By the theater’s opening, the marketing changed to promote these entranceways as part of the numerous fire exits that added to the safe design of the theater. A photograph spread in the *Pioneer Press* shows an image of the front facade labeled “Exchange Place Exits.” These “special exits” on Exchange were also useful for those who were automobile drivers, enabling them to park without interference from the streetcar line on Wabasha.<sup>83</sup>

The use of reinforced concrete for its fireproof qualities also allowed Marshall and Fox to create a dynamic, intimate auditorium where no patron sat more than eighty-seven feet from the stage, fitting thirteen hundred patrons in a relatively compact space. It also enabled the balconies to be suspended and supported without columns that obscured a patron’s view.<sup>84</sup>

The local newspapers also touted the theater’s hygienic qualities, calling it “a model of sanitary perfection” and “the most safe and hygienic playhouse in the world.”<sup>85</sup> Most likely this was in reference to the interior bathrooms and expansive seats and seating arrangement. Marshall and Fox’s plans for the theater show a men’s restroom and smoking room located directly under the Exchange Street lobby at the basement level. A women’s restroom and sitting room sat directly above the lobby at the mezzanine level at the rear of the balcony.<sup>86</sup>

Promoters of the Shubert Theatre publicized these features to differentiate the facility from the competition. Entrepreneurs had established theaters, often called opera houses, in both Saint Paul and Minneapolis by the 1860s. The Grand Opera House, which opened in Saint Paul in 1883, booked vaudeville and variety acts as well as legitimate theater productions. Larger and more ornate facilities appeared in the 1890s including Metropolitan Opera Houses in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Historian Anne-Charlotte Harvey described these as “flagship venues” for “elite mainstream theatre.” She added: “The managers of these theatres booked New York-produced touring productions with international stars or first-class American actors.” Saint Paul also had the Olympic Theater and Litt’s Grand Opera, built in 1884 and 1890, respectively.

<sup>80</sup> Day, “Sam S. Shubert Theater Ready to Open.”

<sup>81</sup> Fleming, “An Honest Reporter Defeats Corruption.”

<sup>82</sup> “Shubert Theater Site Announced,” *Saint Paul Dispatch*, May 22, 1909.

<sup>83</sup> Day, “Sam S. Shubert Theater Ready to Open.”

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.; “World Theater Usage,” undated manuscript from “Originals for World Theater” folder, Minnesota Public Radio Archive, Saint Paul.

<sup>85</sup> Day, “Sam S. Shubert Theater Ready to Open.”

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.; Fleming, “An Honest Reporter Defeats Corruption.”

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“None of these theater survives,” historian Larry Millett notes, “and some had very brief lives.” There were also a host of theaters dedicated to burlesque and vaudeville shows, and movie theaters started to appear shortly after the Shubert opened. Millett lists theaters in Saint Paul that were contemporaries of the Shubert including “the Star (1901), on Seventh near Jackson, for many years the city’s most celebrated burlesque house; the first Orpheum (1906), at Fifth and St. Peter, a large and elegant vaudeville house; the Princess (1910), 21 East Seventh Street, another vaudeville house; . . . the Alhambra (1911), 16 East Seventh Street, which appears to have been an early movie theater; the Empress (1911), 479 Wabasha, a vaudeville house that ended its days as a porno theater; and the New Palace (later Orpheum), completed in 1917.”<sup>87</sup>

Of these theaters, regardless of the type of entertainment they offered, only the Shubert and the Orpheum are extant. These survivors share a few interesting associations. The Palace sits on the former site of the Saint Paul Public Library, which burned on April 27, 1915, opening up a piece of prime real estate. Herman Benz seized the opportunity and purchased a lease on the land. Benz and Sons entered into an agreement with prominent Twin Cities theater owners Moses Finkelstein and Isaac Ruben to construct and operate a new theater on the site. Meanwhile, the Benzes worked separately to erect a hotel building on the site to be connected with the new theater. The Palace Theater and the Saint Francis Hotel opened on November 27, 1916. The hotel was soon a prestigious business. As on the Shubert Building, the theater’s marquee sat at the middle of the hotel building on Seventh Street, and this setup caused patrons to enter at the side of the auditorium instead of the rear.<sup>88</sup>

### **The Shubert and Entertainment and Recreation in Saint Paul**

The play performed on the Shubert Theatre’s opening night was *The Fourth Estate*, a drama that asked the question, “Can an honest reporter fight, singled-handed, a combination of influential advertisers and the United States courts?”<sup>89</sup> Rehearsals of the play were overseen by J. J. Shubert, who was in town superintending the opening of both theaters. At the August 29 formal opening, patrons were greeted and seated by the all-female crew of ushers elegantly dressed in black—a Shubert trademark. Now, in 1910, Saint Paul was on the cultural map. It had a luxurious new facility for legitimate theater that was plugged into the first-class Shubert empire.<sup>90</sup>

The year was a particularly profitable one for the Shuberts as well. In addition to the Minneapolis and Saint Paul houses, they also opened Sam S. Shubert Theatres in Boston and Saint Louis and controlled seventy major theaters across the country for the 1910–1911 season. The Shuberts expanded again in December

<sup>87</sup> “Downtown St. Paul Theaters,” 7-3-7-5, 8-2; Larry Millett, *Lost Twin Cities* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1992), 122–123, 247–248; Anne-Charlotte Harvey, “Performing Ethnicity: The Role of Swedish Theatre in the Twin Cities,” in *Swedes in the Twin Cities*, ed. Philip J. Anderson and Dag Blanck, 150–152 (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001); John K. Sherman, “Music and Theater,” in *A History of the Arts in Minnesota*, ed. William Van O’Connor, 51-59 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958).

<sup>88</sup> “New Palace or Orpheum Theater,” undated manuscript from Ramsey County Historical Society, Orpheum/Palace Theater file, Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, Saint Paul.

<sup>89</sup> Fleming, “An Honest Reporter Defeats Corruption.”

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*; Day, “Sam S. Shubert Theater Ready to Open”; “New Shubert Theater Is Palace of Beauty,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, August 28, 1910; “New Shubert Theatre in St. Paul,” *New York Times*, August 29, 1910; “Shubert Is Ready for Opening Night,” *Minneapolis Journal*, August 29, 1910.



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1911, when they opened a Shubert Theatre in New York City, and the following year, New Haven, Connecticut's Shubert Theatre had its opening night.<sup>91</sup>

As the Shuberts' success skyrocketed, the Syndicate began to crumble. In May 1910, twelve hundred small-town theaters joined in opposition to the Syndicate and incorporated an organization called the National Theatre Owners' Association. Any applicant had to "stand for independence" so that "theatrical power will never be given to one man." Lee Shubert responded, "We are more than pleased with the action. . . . This last development means the absolute supremacy of the 'open-door policy.'" The Syndicate refused to do business with member theaters.<sup>92</sup> Less than a week later, the Eastern Managers' Association formed with the same "open-door" premise for sixty additional theaters. By 1913, Hayman, Nixon, and Zimmerman had all retired from the Syndicate.<sup>93</sup>

Whatever success the Shubert brothers experienced, the Saint Paul Shubert's glory days were short-lived. For the first decade of its existence, the theater "hobbled along . . . as a moderately successful legitimate theater and vaudeville house."<sup>94</sup> Both the Minneapolis and Saint Paul Shuberts were initially under the direction of Andrew G. "Buzz" Bainbridge, a successful promoter who founded and ran the "Bainbridge Players," the longest-running stock company in the history of Minnesota.<sup>95</sup> By 1913, though, the initial success began to waver. The *Minneapolis Tribune* reported that the summer season at the Saint Paul Shubert would focus on musicals while dramatic and comedic performances could be seen at the Minneapolis Shubert. The article mentions that William P. Cullen, who had "a national reputation as a manager of musical comedy attractions," would be in charge of the Saint Paul Shubert.<sup>96</sup>

Two months later, the *Tribune* reported that the Shuberts, who had "vanquished Klaw and Erlanger," were losing their grip on the Twin Cities. "The St. Paul Shubert theater has been a loser all the time and the Minneapolis Shubert has made little money, say those who know." L. N. Scott was now the theatrical "boss" of the area, and the Shuberts reportedly wanted to rid themselves of the leases on their two namesake theaters. "Were they unburdened, they felt sure that the two Metropolitan theaters here would get the highest class of attractions and the two Shubert theaters here would get whatever those who took over the leases wished to play in them." The Metropolitan Opera Houses in Saint Paul and Minneapolis were apparently trying to reassert their status as the leading local venues after the novelty of the Shuberts wore off. The operators of the Metropolitan theaters planned to rent the Shuberts for \$39,000 per year as showcases for "minor attractions." Bainbridge was still manager of both, and he was told to "get what he can out of them what he can so as to lessen the burden on the two Metropolitan houses."<sup>97</sup>

By 1915, Frank C. Priest is listed as the manager of the Saint Paul Shubert, but the following year, the Shubert Players, who had renamed themselves "The Shubert Stock Company," were performing at the

<sup>91</sup> Boston Landmarks Commission, "TH-CBD-476a," Theatre Information Form; "New St. Louis Shubert Theatre Opened," *New York Times*, November 1, 1910; "New Sam S. Shubert Theatre Opens," *New York Times*, December 12, 1914; McNamara, *The Shuberts of Broadway*, 63.

<sup>92</sup> "1,200 Theatres Are Independent Now," *New York Times*, May 8, 1910.

<sup>93</sup> "More Theatres in Open Door," *New York Times*, May 14, 1910; McNamara, *The Shuberts of Broadway*, 63-64.

<sup>94</sup> Kenney, *Twin Cities Picture Show*, 181.

<sup>95</sup> *R. L. Polk and Company's St. Paul City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1911), 1542; Granger and Grossman, "Sam S. Shubert Theatre," 8-16.

<sup>96</sup> "Variety in Summer Shows May Be Seen at Shubert," *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 11, 1913.

<sup>97</sup> Kenney, *Twin Cities Picture Show*, 6-7, 222, 228; "Curtain Rung Down on War of Theaters," *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 10, 1913.

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house. Performances continued over the next couple of years.<sup>98</sup> By fall 1918, the Shubert Stock Company was under the direction of Earl Lee and was receiving favorable reviews for its work. Before the company could get any steam behind it, Saint Paul mandated the closing of all theaters, churches, and “other places where people might congregate” in November 1918 because of the Spanish influenza epidemic. The ban forced the company to disband so that members could seek other employment. The Shubert went without a local company until late January 1919, when the Otis Oliver Players booked into the theater and ran until June 1. Other troupes who performed during the theater’s first decade of use were Wright Huntington and the Ernest Fisher Players.<sup>99</sup>

Actors had long been under the thumb of producers, first the Syndicate, then the Shuberts. The American Federation of Labor had organized musicians and stagehands prior to World War I, but those in the acting profession could not organize successfully. By 1919, labor unrest came to a head, as more than four million American workers went out on strike at some point during the year. Among these workers were actors, who formed the Actors Equity Association after six years of negotiations with the Managers’ Association. They called a strike in New York on August 7, shaking the entertainment business to the core. In the Twin Cities, observers believed that the strike would have little effect on Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Rather, Buzz Bainbridge, who continued to manage both Shuberts, was able to secure two professional stock companies from New York to perform in Minnesota. Programs from that time indicate that the Saint Paul Shubert featured the “St. Paul Players” as well as the “New Shubert Players,” who performed under Bainbridge while Howard W. McCoy managed the facilities.<sup>100</sup>

Bainbridge continued his work as managing director of the Saint Paul Shubert, overseeing a thirty-five-week season, but it would prove to be his last in the city. This was his “one attempt to establish himself in St. Paul . . . [and it] was the only time in which he was reasonably successful.” Although he continued his work with his players in Minneapolis, he would not return to Saint Paul for the 1920–1921 season.<sup>101</sup>

### **The Decline of Traveling Legitimate Theater and the Rise of Motion Pictures**

Bainbridge’s decision would put the Saint Paul Shubert on a path on which it would remain for nearly sixty years. The entire country was headed in this direction—live theater was being usurped by motion pictures. Americans had displayed an insatiable fascination with the movies since their introduction around the turn of the century. For theater managers who had been bossed around by Syndicate and Shuberts for decades, motion pictures were the answer. Large, expensive, and elaborate facilities were unnecessary; all an owner needed to hire was a projectionist and a pianist. Customers essentially took care of themselves. Managers

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<sup>98</sup> R. L. Polk and Company’s *St. Paul City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1915), 1478; playbill for *Jerry, the Girl an Hour Ahead of Time*, October 22, 1916; playbill for *The Deep Purple*, July 1917; playbill for *Capt. Rocket*, June 9, 1918, from program collection of the Shubert Theatre, Saint Paul, Minnesota, 1910–1920, Minnesota Historical Society Collections, Saint Paul.

<sup>99</sup> Andrus, “A History of the Legitimate Theater in St. Paul,” 16–17; “City Shut Tight by Influenza Lid as Plague Abates,” *Saint Paul Daily News*, November 6, 1918. Thomas B. McCormick managed the theater in 1919; R. L. Polk and Company’s *St. Paul City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1919), 1113; Sherman, “Music and Theater,” 55.

<sup>100</sup> Andrus, “A History of the Legitimate Theater in St. Paul,” 8–9, 17–18; “Finkelstein, Ruben, Lease Two Shuberts,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, August 3, 1919; “East’s Loss by Actors’ Strike is Twin City Theaters’ Gain,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, August 17, 1919; playbill for *Happiness*, August 30, 1919; playbill for *The Country Cousin*, September 7, 1919; playbill for *Daddy Long-Legs*, December 21, 1919, from program collection of the Shubert Theatre, Saint Paul, Minnesota, 1910–1920, Minnesota Historical Society Collections, Saint Paul.

<sup>101</sup> Andrus, “A History of the Legitimate Theater in St. Paul,” 98; *Shubert Buzzer*, January 2, 1921 (Minneapolis: Shubert Stock Company, 1921).

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owned the films, so they did not have to pay out for repeat performances. “The silently moving image, once an adjunct to a variety show, became a primary entertainment form.”<sup>102</sup>

At the same time, traveling theater shows from New York began to decline for a variety of reasons. Increasing railroad rates shrank profit margins, and high-quality plays were being sent out from New York with incompetent casts—a situation that encouraged talented actors to stay in the city. These factors, along with intensified competition and commercialization of theaters in New York, led to the city becoming the center of high-quality legitimate theater; the number of such theaters quadrupled between 1903 and 1927. As a result, local stock companies, overshadowed since the expansion of the railroad, saw a resurgence.<sup>103</sup>

From this point, Saint Paul suffered from a lack of stock theater activity even as it thrived in other cities. In April 1925, L. N. Scott, manager of the Metropolitan Theater, announced that the Bainbridge Players would perform shows at his facility for eight to nine weeks. The public was even allowed to vote on which plays it wanted performed. Unfortunately, the company closed down after four weeks because of a lack of patronage. “Bainbridge had been interested in establishing a permanent stock company in St. Paul but after this failure was loath to do so.”<sup>104</sup>

Saint Paulites were evidently more interested in movies than they were in legitimate theater. By 1919, there were already six movie theaters in the city, and the Shubert quickly joined the ranks. *R. L. Polk and Company's St. Paul City Directory* for 1922 lists Harold G. Nathan as the manager of the Shubert, where one can see “motion pictures.” Although five different men serve as manager over the next decade, the Shubert existed as a movie house continuously until 1930.<sup>105</sup>

That year, one last attempt was made to define the Shubert as a playhouse for legitimate theater. In August, Charles Lindholm, who had been involved in amateur theatricals, announced that a professional stock company would open at the Shubert on September 11. He began selling tickets for the season and went to New York on September 1 to find the company only to suddenly cancel his plans. Undismayed, Arthur Holman, an actor and director for the Casey Players, organized a stock company. Ivan Miller and John Todd, who had appeared in Minneapolis and Saint Paul with the Bainbridge Players, joined the troupe.<sup>106</sup> Approximately \$25,000 was spent on remodeling work to the theater's interior, and the Shubert reopened on October 4, 1930, with a showing of a new play by Myron Coureval Fagan titled *Nancy's Private Affair*. The performance featured Mary Newton, an actress who had given up a movie contract to take the position in Saint Paul. Opening night sold out and was attended by such noteworthy citizens as Governor Theodore

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<sup>102</sup> Morrison, *Theatres*, 25.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 22–24.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 19–20.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 106; *R. L. Polk and Company's St. Paul City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1922), 1387; *R. L. Polk and Company's St. Paul City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1923), 1156; *R. L. Polk and Company's St. Paul City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1924), 1141; *R. L. Polk and Company's St. Paul City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1925), 1127; *R. L. Polk and Company's St. Paul City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1926), 1164; *R. L. Polk and Company's St. Paul City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1927), 1102; *Polk's St. Paul City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1928), 1192; *Polk's St. Paul (Minnesota) City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1929), 1205; *Polk's St. Paul (Minnesota) City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1930), 1322.

<sup>106</sup> Andrus, “A History of the Legitimate Theater in St. Paul,” 33–34.

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Christianson and former Saint Paul mayor Laurence C. Hodgson.<sup>107</sup> In his review the following day, James Gray rejoiced, saying, “I regard it as a triumph . . . that this charming and comfortable intimate theater has become once more the setting for my favorite form of entertainment.” He did not know what “madness had kept it in the doldrums all these seasons,” but he compared the theater, with its “spic-and-span new dress, and wearing its flowers on opening night,” to “an ingenue at her coming out party.”<sup>108</sup>

Various civic groups sponsored the plays that season. For example, the American Legion sponsored *Hell Bent for Heaven*; *Nice People* was sponsored by the Junior League; the Shriners put on *French Doll*; the Saint Paul Dental Auxiliary sponsored *The Nineteenth Hole*; and the Kindergarten Club and the Mendota Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution were behind *June Moon*. The season was deemed a success when it came to a close in March 1931. Arthur Holman told the public, “We have given St. Paul one of the finest stock theaters in the Northwest, and have tried during the current seasons to maintain a standard of quality both in production and acting that would make St. Paul proud of its theatre, and I feel we have succeeded. When we open next season, we anticipate having the majority of the present Players with us again.”<sup>109</sup> The theater encouraged patrons to make reservations early for the 1931–1932 season for a “host of new attractions in the way of plays but with the old favorites” filling the new roles.<sup>110</sup>

When the new season opened in fall 1931, Holman continued as director of the Shubert Theater Players and announced a thirty-two-week season to start on October 10. The Women’s City Club of Saint Paul, the Association of Commerce, the Junior Association of Commerce, and Theater Committee of the Saint Paul Association were involved. The Women’s City Club sold booklets of twenty tickets. Five hundred booklets sold on the first day, and by late September, patrons had purchased two thousand.<sup>111</sup>

In an interview with the *Saint Paul Daily News*, Carl T. Schuneman, president of the Association of Commerce, underscored the optimism felt about the prospect of more theater in the city: “The stimulation of activity in the St. Paul loop which will result this winter from thirty-two weeks of legitimate drama, night after night, will be of inestimable benefit to everyone concerned.”<sup>112</sup> Arthur Holman promised that the new company “not only [would] uphold the high standard created last season, but [would] surpass it in every way.”<sup>113</sup>

The opening night of the 1931–1932 season brought the same optimism and glamour as the opening night of the previous season. Governor Floyd B. Olson and Gerhard J. Bundlie, mayor of Saint Paul, as well as various business and social leaders, attended the opening night and received a forty-page program designed by architect Frank Post.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> “Shubert Ready for Opening Saturday”; playbill for *Rebound*, March 1, 1931, and Shubert Theater Players Souvenir Program, week of March 1, 1931, 6, from “Shubert Theatre Players, Saint Paul, Minnesota” file, Minnesota Historical Society Collections, Saint Paul, 6.

<sup>108</sup> Gray, “‘Stock’ Welcomed at Shubert Theater.”

<sup>109</sup> Shubert Theater Players Souvenir Program, 14.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*; Andrus, “A History of the Legitimate Theater in St. Paul,” 33–34.

<sup>111</sup> Andrus, “A History of the Legitimate Theater in St. Paul,” 35.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> “Strong Cast Is Assembled for Shubert Plays,” *Saint Paul Daily News*, September 13, 1931.

<sup>114</sup> Andrus, “A History of the Legitimate Theater in St. Paul,” 36.

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The dream was short-lived. On November 15, Holman and the leading man quit. Cyril Raymond became the new director and Lawrence Fletcher the new leading man. On November 22, Peggy West was engaged to play the lead in *A Modern Virgin*, a role she had performed in New York. Instead of disbanding, the company voted to form a cooperative group—the Shubert Cooperative Players. George Benz and Sons, owner of the theater, donated a week’s rent, lighting, and heat to help the new venture along. A twenty-five-piece orchestra also became part of the group. Soon they were joined by members of the Bainbridge Players. The group’s inertia picked up—even as some actors withdrew, others quickly joined.<sup>115</sup>

As seemed to be the case with the fateful season, it was not to last. On February 20, 1932, George Benz and Sons decided to convert the Shubert into a movie theater, and the cooperative had to find a new home. The group lasted a little more than one month in its new home—the City Auditorium—before it and professional resident stock theater in Saint Paul took their final bow.<sup>116</sup>

The Benzes were not alone in their decision to transform the Shubert into a movie house. By 1931, “even some of the venerable downtown theaters, including the Shuberts in both cities, switched to dime picture runs in an effort to boost attendance.”<sup>117</sup> For the second time in as many years, the Shubert’s interior saw another major remodeling. United Artists spent \$20,000 to “fit the Shubert for the presentation of talking pictures” on March 4 to show Gloria Swanson in *Tonight or Never*. Among the additions was a new type of screen, “processed so that injurious rays of light from the projection lamps are filtered out resulting in clear pictures and removing the cause of eye strain.” A new lighting system provided colored visual effects, and new modern sound equipment enabled the showing of Hollywood productions.<sup>118</sup> Liebenberg and Kaplan were again involved in the work, and they drew up plans for an enclosed ticket booth under the marquee on Wabasha Street.<sup>119</sup>

### **The New World**

The following year, Al Steffes, a “fiery exhibitor” from north Minneapolis, acquired both the Minneapolis and the Saint Paul Shubert Theatres. He renamed the Minneapolis theater the “Alvin,” his middle name. The Saint Paul Shubert became the “World Theater” to highlight its new role as a movie house for international film.<sup>120</sup>

The new ownership meant more changes to the interior, again designed by Liebenberg and Kaplan. The auditorium, which began as ornate and Rococo before being reconfigured into French Provincial, was now a proudly ostentatious combination of Art Deco and Exoticism [See Figures 15 and 16]. Using primarily fabric, the architects transformed the auditorium into a space resembling a silk Turkish tent—“splendor beyond compare . . . an atmosphere of refined intimacy.”<sup>121</sup> Fabric was gathered at a central point below the main ceiling and radiated outward to the walls, ending in stenciled hanging panels. The walls were covered in ruched silk with intermittent vertical pleated panels. The amount of seating in the auditorium was

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 36–37.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>117</sup> Kenney, *Twin Cities Picture Show*, 81.

<sup>118</sup> “Shubert to Be Run by United Artists,” *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, February 21, 1932.

<sup>119</sup> “Downtown St. Paul Theaters,” 1981, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, available at the State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, 8-1; Liebenberg and Kaplan, drawing for Job 941, February 11, 1932, “World Theater” file, Northwest Architectural Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

<sup>120</sup> Kenney, *Twin Cities Picture Show*, 84.

<sup>121</sup> World Theater advertisement, *Saint Paul Dispatch*, October 13, 1933.

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dramatically reduced, as the fabric concealed the balcony and gallery, and much of the row seating on the main floor was converted into loges with armchairs and couches for seating. A grapelike cluster of balloon lights hung from the center of the ceiling and sprouted from the concealed loge, giving the theater “a light-hearted appearance.”<sup>122</sup>

This is also most likely when the corridor at the rear of the theater was created. Photographs of the auditorium at the time of the theater’s construction indicate that the Exchange Street lobby shared a wall with the rear of the auditorium. Plates of the Maxine Elliott Theatre in New York depict curtains partitioning this area off from the rest of the auditorium and is most likely the original configuration of the Shubert’s auditorium. Now the rafters created the ceiling of a curved corridor with doorways at the two main aisles [See Figures 11 and 12].

Other photographs of this period show the newly created curved corridor filled with armchairs and settees like those in the auditorium’s loges. The ceiling has been painted with a dark enamel paint, and the rafters and trim accentuated with metallic paint. A sign on the wall shared with the lobby reads “Ladies Lounge.” [See Figure 18] Another photograph from this time shows a redecorated lobby.

This corridor, along with the Exchange and Wabasha Street lobbies, received new coats of paint in keeping with the flamboyant Art Deco design. The walls of the Wabasha lobby displayed a zigzag pattern, diamond designs, high-gloss black enamel paint, and a diamond pattern of mirrors in the ceiling with a cluster of balloon lights hanging from its center that accentuated the coffered ceiling.

When the redone World Theater opened in October 1933, its new look and amenities were advertised as part of its appeal. The loges of the “Remodeled-Refurnished-Redecorated . . . Cinema Salon of Enchanting Beauty” allowed smoking and could be reserved in advance.<sup>123</sup> The theater’s opening was called “The Greatest Event of the Northwest,” and patrons were encouraged to “be among the throngs who [would] see this palace of dreams reveal its gorgeous beauty to all Saint Paul.”<sup>124</sup>

The revelation took place on October 13, 1933. Governor Floyd B. Olson again attended the event along with the mayor of Saint Paul—now William Mahoney. Olson, whom the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* called a “life-long friend” of Al Steffes, commended Steffes’s decision to show international films at the World and lauded the city for having a theater “of the World’s type.” Olson “asserted that a theater devoted to foreign and unusual films contributes greatly to mutual understanding among nations.” Mahoney agreed that the World would augment the cultural climate of Saint Paul. No tears appeared to be shed over the loss of legitimate theater. Mrs. Arthur A. Stewart, a member of the stock company, also expressed her appreciation over the reopening of the theater.<sup>125</sup>

Cameras filmed the three hundred guests as they passed under the new Wabasha Street marquee, with its flashy sign of lightning bolts radiating from a globe, and entered the lobby “carpeted with heavy rugs,” continuing through to the foyer, “the walls of which [were] decorated modernistically.” After patrons enjoyed the feature presentation while sitting in the loges or in “over-wide, widely-spaced theater seats,”

<sup>122</sup> “World Theater Shows New Togs,” *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, October 14, 1933.

<sup>123</sup> World Theater advertisement, *Saint Paul Dispatch*, October 11, 1933.

<sup>124</sup> World Theater advertisement, *Saint Paul Dispatch*, October 13, 1933.

<sup>125</sup> “World Theater Shows New Togs.”

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they viewed the film of their arrival shown on the screen.<sup>126</sup> Although the World was a nice compromise between high culture and the common person's love of movies, its existence was further proof that legitimate theater had become passe. Between 1919 and 1935, the number of movie theaters in Saint Paul increased from six to thirty-one.<sup>127</sup>

The World does not appear to have always strictly adhered to Steffes's international film intentions. "Amusements" listed in the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* indicated that the World often appealed less refined tastes. In July 1935, the theater showed the musical *My Heart Is Calling*, starring Polish tenor Jan Kiepura. Augmenting the film was a "fight picture" of boxers Joe Louis and Primo Carnera going "round by round" and "blow by blow."<sup>128</sup> Other films starred native actors like Mickey Rooney. Many movies shown at the "healthfully cool" theater came from the British film industry, most likely because of the convenience of a shared language. By the 1940s, the World was competing with other neighborhood theaters for the first run of popular Hollywood films.<sup>129</sup>

### Post-World War II

After decades of success in legitimate theater and Broadway musicals, Lee Shubert died on December 25, 1953. Four years after his death, the Shubert family was affiliated with nearly half of the playhouses providing legitimate theater in the United States. An antitrust suit brought upon them by the government led them to dispose of twelve theaters and cut their connections with the booking business. Exactly ten years after Lee's passing, J. J. died at his apartment on West Forty-fourth that overlooked the theater and alley named after Sam.<sup>130</sup>

Lee's *New York Times* obituary adeptly described the legacy the Shuberts would leave in the theater world: "For a substantial part of this century, Lee Shubert, with his brother, Jacob J., looked upon the precious acres covered by Broadway's theaters with much of the same sense of prerogative of a feudal lord regarding his fiefdom. Sitting in his old office in a turret overlooking Shubert Alley the tense little man had thumbed through deeds to most of the city's legitimate theatres and had toted revenue from most stages shows in the nation."<sup>131</sup>

By the time of J. J.'s death in 1963, Saint Paul's Shubert Theatre, now known for three decades by the nondescript name of "World Theater," had long since lost its ties to the boys from Syracuse. Passing years weakened its affiliation with Benjamin Marshall, the Chicago architect who took great pains to make the theater as safe and hygienic as possible. The Louis XVI details were long gone, and the 1933 Exoticism looked dated to theatergoers, who, like most Americans, were succumbing to the siren song of suburban theaters with their abundant parking and modern amenities.

In 1952, an advertisement in the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* announced that the World Theater was closed for redecorating and would open Friday, August 8, at noon under new management.<sup>132</sup> The new managers were

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Andrus, "A History of the Legitimate Theater in St. Paul," 106.

<sup>128</sup> "Downtown Theaters," advertisement, *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, July 2, 1935.

<sup>129</sup> "Downtown Theaters," advertisements, *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, July 4, 1935, August 2, 1937, August 6, 1937, August 5, 1942, August 2, 1945, and July 21, 1946.

<sup>130</sup> "Lee Shubert Dies in Hospital"; "J. J. Shubert Dies; Last of 3 Brothers."

<sup>131</sup> "Lee Shubert Dies in Hospital."

<sup>132</sup> World Theater advertisement, *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, August 2, 1952.

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George Granstrom and Ted Mann, men with reputable histories with theaters in the Twin Cities. Even though the World was forty years old and had stiff competition from newer theaters, Mann and Granstrom were confident that they could bring it up to par. Because both men owned suburban theaters, and they knew that the postwar, automobile-loving public was not using mass transit to go to the movies. Therefore, they offered free parking after 5:30 p.m. in the lot on Exchange Street, which had been vacant since the demolition of the former capitol building in 1937.<sup>133</sup> The men noted that it was unusual for any downtown theater to have free parking, and their setup would be “a big convenience for the patrons.”<sup>134</sup>

Focusing on “showmanship,” the men said, “We will attempt to bring to St. Paul area moviegoers the type of pictures they have always enjoyed in a manner other comparable metropolitan centers are being given—and then some.”<sup>135</sup> Customers were invited to the World’s “Gala Re-opening” where they could enjoy W. Somerset Maugham’s *Encore* in air-conditioned comfort.<sup>136</sup>

Upon taking over the World, Granstrom and Mann modernized the interior. Few photographs exist showing the interior, but accounts of its appearance in the 1970s indicate that the Wabasha Street lobby had cheap wood and vinyl wall coverings. While the 1933 renovations concealed both the balcony and the gallery with fabric draping, the 1952 renovation blocked off the gallery with a false ceiling. The paneled loge was covered over with wood battens. Blue acoustic tile extended up the auditorium walls to the dropped ceiling. Again, the concrete construction of the World Theater worked to its advantage, as the concrete floors of the balcony, though concealed by the false ceiling, were maintained. Liebenberg and Kaplan again designed a new sign and marquee for the Wabasha Street entrance.<sup>137</sup>

By the mid-1950s, the World was showing Hollywood movies, such as *The King and I*, *An American in Paris*, and *Sabrina*. Interspersed among these were international films, like England’s *The Night My Number Came Up* starring Michael Redgrave and Italy’s *Crossed Swords* with Errol Flynn and Gina Lollobrigida. In 1958, it very appropriately featured Michael Todd’s *Around the World in 80 Days*. Advertisements always promoted the free evening parking and the air-conditioned interior.<sup>138</sup> Movies such as *South Pacific* were so popular that the theater encouraged patrons to “come early for better choice seats.”<sup>139</sup>

In July 1970, General Cinema Corporation of Boston, one of the two biggest motion picture theater operations in the Midwest and owner of two hundred theaters nationwide, announced that it was in negotiations to purchase fifteen of the eighteen Twin Cities theaters owned by Mann Theaters. When the transaction took place, General Cinema actually acquired twenty-one area theaters at a cost of \$5,750,000

<sup>133</sup> *Minneapolis Star Journal* and *Minneapolis Tribune* photograph collection, former state capitol building demolition, October 1937, Minnesota Historical Society Collections, Saint Paul.

<sup>134</sup> Diehl, “World to Reopen Under New Management.”

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> World Theater advertisement, *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, August 8, 1952.

<sup>137</sup> Kenney, *Twin Cities Picture Show*, 182; Patricia Weaver Francisco, “The World Is Back in Business,” *Minnesota Monthly* (May 1981): 10; Liebenberg and Kaplan, drawing for remodeling marquee and box office, August 10, 1954, “World Theater” file, Northwest Architectural Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

<sup>138</sup> World Theater advertisement, *Saint Paul Dispatch*, September 3, 1954, World Theater advertisements, *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, July 17, 1956, July 18, 1956, and August 1, 1958.

<sup>139</sup> World Theater advertisement, *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, July 24, 1959.



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and had agreed to maintain Mann's management team.<sup>140</sup> "The contract, which [was] for 'a number of years,' allow[ed] Mann to continue his outside interests, which [had recently] involved motion picture production."<sup>141</sup>

The sale soon led to problems. Less than a year after the changeover, the federal government accused General Cinemas of running a monopoly, and the Justice Department filed an antitrust suit against the company. In June 1973, the government dropped the suit after Judge Philip Neville made General Cinema agree not to purchase any new theaters in the Twin Cities during the next decade and ordered that it sell half of the twenty-one theaters it acquired. The company had two years to sell its "cinematic corpses."<sup>142</sup>

The new ownership could not reverse the national trend—the World Theater was part of a dying breed. In 1972, the Grandview Theater in St. Paul installed rocker seats. Suburban megaplexes such as Roseville 4 boasted giant parking lots, and a variety of movies attracted the majority of the Twin Cities' audience. The once luxurious downtown palaces, originally designed for patrons of mass transit, suffered from expensive parking. Around 1961, the Saint Paul Department of Libraries, Auditoriums, and Museums announced that its complex for the Saint Paul Arts and Sciences Council would be located on the site of the former capitol building at Tenth and Wabasha. This sounded the death knell for the World's free parking promotion that figured so heavily in its advertising and kept it on par with the new suburban theaters.<sup>143</sup>

Customers also worried about urban street crime and the down-and-out appearance of the city centers. With these disadvantages, General Cinema could not rid itself of the required number of theaters within the allotted time period. The courts granted an extension, and in April 1975, the Metropolitan Theater Corporation leased the three Saint Paul loop theaters—the World, the Orpheum, and the Strand. The solution lasted only six months before the corporation succumbed to financial problems. During this time, the World temporarily closed when Metropolitan fell behind on its rent. General was again stuck with the three theaters. When the lease on the Strand expired, General Cinema refused to take the theater back, and it closed permanently.<sup>144</sup>

By November 1976, the World was in financial trouble, and on July 14, 1977, "another sad chapter in the continuing dreary motion-picture history of downtown St. Paul [was] written"<sup>145</sup> with the closure of the World and Orpheum theaters.<sup>146</sup>

### **Live Performances Return**

It looked like the Saint Paul branch of the Shubert empire would close for good and possibly be demolished for the commodity of parking. In 1977, Minnesota Public Radio's (MPR) program *A Prairie Home Companion* found its performance space at the Saint Paul Arts and Science Council to be no longer

<sup>140</sup> Jim Fuller, "Boston Firm Seeks to Buy Mann Theaters," *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 31, 1970; Jim Fuller, "Ted Mann Sells 21 Area Theaters," *Minneapolis Tribune*, August 7, 1970.

<sup>141</sup> Fuller, "Ted Mann Sells 21 Area Theaters."

<sup>142</sup> Bill Diehl, "World, Orpheum Closing," *Saint Paul Dispatch*, July 6, 1977.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.; Jane King Hession, *Ralph Rapson: Sixty Years of Modern Design* (Afton, Minn.: Afton Historical Society Press, 1999), 133.

<sup>144</sup> Bill Diehl, "World, Orpheum Closing."

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Kenney, *Twin Cities Picture Show*, 182.

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sufficient and began the search for a new broadcasting home. The World became available, and *Prairie Home* began leasing the theater that year.<sup>147</sup>

After a while, MPR considered the benefits of purchasing the theater. In 1980, when terms were agreed upon, the MPR's board of directors exercised an option to purchase the facility and incorporated the World Theater Corporation, a corporate subsidiary of MPR.<sup>148</sup> Unfortunately, by 1984, years of neglect were made manifest as pieces of plaster began to fall from the ceiling, and a building inspector mandated that *A Prairie Home Companion* evacuate the World. Worried about the fate of the theater, a group of Saint Paul arts patrons hired engineers to inspect it. When they found the building to be structurally sound, the idea of renovating the World took root. The coalition drafted a \$1.5 million restoration plan that kicked off with a benefit *Prairie Home* show at the Orpheum. The Articles of Incorporation were restated on January 10, 1985, and indicated that the "purpose of this Corporation shall be to acquire, own, operate, and renovate the World Theater . . . and such adjacent properties as may be appropriate to the acquisition, ownership, operation and renovation of the World Theater."<sup>149</sup>

When the suspended ceiling was removed and the gallery exposed, it appeared the problem of insufficient seating could be solved with the reintroduction of the gallery into the auditorium space.<sup>150</sup> To closely align the theater to its original appearance, MPR commissioned the architectural firm Miller, Hanson, Westerbeck, and Bell to design the renovations. Conrad Schmitt Studios, an interior design firm "well known for its accurate and spirited restorations of older theaters across the country," oversaw renovation work on the theater's interior.<sup>151</sup>

Plans extended beyond the original \$1.5 million project. In response, MPR launched a "Save the World" campaign to solicit donations. Fund-raising efforts brought in a little over \$2 million from individual, corporate, and public sponsors, but it left MPR well short of repaying the \$3.5 million in costs. To cover the difference, MPR took out a mortgage on its headquarters building in downtown Saint Paul.<sup>152</sup>

The restoration work was necessarily extensive to reverse more than fifty years of inappropriate alterations. Designers used original building plans and historic photographs as guidelines for the work, but at times they had to rely on conjecture when original material not depicted in historic sources was missing. The areas that once contained eight boxes were the most prominent vacancy. A clear rendering of the original plasterwork was unavailable, so designers placed intricate swirl designs on the boxes' faces based on Marshall and Fox's original plans. To replace sections of missing decorations, molds were cast from existing plasterwork along the walls, ceiling, and proscenium and then installed piece by piece in other areas. Twenty-three-karat gold

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.; Francisco, "The World Is Back in Business," 12; Bob Lundegaard, "The New World—It Will Reopen with 'Prairie Home Companion' Broadcast Saturday," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, January 10, 1986.

<sup>148</sup> "World Theater Usage," undated draft from "Originals for World Theater" folder, Minnesota Public Radio Archive, Saint Paul.

<sup>149</sup> American Public Media Group, "ftc\_articles.pdf," [http://americanpublicmediagroup.publicradio.org/corpdocs/ftc\\_articles.pdf](http://americanpublicmediagroup.publicradio.org/corpdocs/ftc_articles.pdf) (accessed February 1, 2010).

<sup>150</sup> Kenney, *Twin Cities Picture Show*, 182; "World Theater Usage"; James Barron, "Jovial Radio Show Plans to Redo Its Old Theater," *New York Times*, July 8, 1984.

<sup>151</sup> "World Theater Usage."

<sup>152</sup> Kris Pranke, "1910 Theater Awakens to City's Modern World," *Saint Paul Skyway News*, April 23, 1986; Noel Holston, "Keillor Comes Full Circle, Back to the Midwestern World," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, October 9, 1992.

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leaf highlighted the detail's intricacies. The 1933 wall built between the corridor and the auditorium was maintained, and a broadcasting booth was constructed at the center rear of the main floor.<sup>153</sup>

The Wabasha Street lobby was permanently closed. At the time, it was wrongfully assumed that this was a reversion to the original use of the Exchange Street doorways. The *Skyway News* reported, "In another effort to re-create the original, the doors used when the building first opened in 1910 will serve again as the entrance. 'When the theater was being used as a movie house, it opened on Wabasha. . . . But we've gone back to the original front doors, which haven't been used since the 1930s.'" <sup>154</sup> Rather, this would mark the first time in the theater's history that the Exchange Street doorways would be used as designed by Marshall and Fox. The reclaimed Exchange Street doorways were augmented by the construction of a glass atrium "in the form of an oversized green house" and a new marquee. Some theatergoers, though, would enter through the same doorway that originally led from the Wabasha lobby, as part of that entryway had been converted into the new box office.<sup>155</sup>

The World Theater reopened on January 11, 1986, for a nationwide broadcast of *A Prairie Home Companion*. The 925-seat theater still needed work, which pushed the official grand opening to April 25–27. Persons attending the latter \$150-per-ticket event enjoyed the performance thanks to the new state-of-the-art lighting and sound systems.<sup>156</sup>

In August 1994, after more than sixty years, the World Theater's name changed. MPR's Board of Trustees hoped that renaming the venue the "Fitzgerald Theater" would not only would serve as a tribute to Saint Paul–bred author F. Scott Fitzgerald but also would also draw attention to the approaching centennial of the author's birth. An amendment to the Articles of Incorporation indicated that the World Theater Corporation would become the "Fitzgerald Theater Corporation."<sup>157</sup>

## THE SHUBERT BUILDING

In August 1909, the *Improvement Bulletin* reported that Buechner and Orth had drawn up plans for an eight-story hotel on Exchange and Wabasha for George Benz and Sons. The 50' by 150' building would be fireproof with a terra cotta front, composition roofing, and hardwood floors. The same publication reported the following February that the architects would begin taking bids for the terra cotta work on what would now be a 40' by 150' six-story hotel building. Its other amenities would include hard wall plaster, plate glass, skylights, steam heat, electric wiring, and elevators. That same month, a building permit for the hotel, with an estimated cost of \$150,000, was taken out.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>153</sup> Lucille Johnsen Stelling, "Welcome to the New World," *Saint Paul Skyway News*, April 23, 1986.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid. The article identifies the speaker as "Schmidt." This probably should read "Schultz" in reference to the interview subject, Marilyn Schultz, director of the World Theater.

<sup>155</sup> Colin Covert, "Let's Party for the Old World," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, April 25, 1986.

<sup>156</sup> Larry Millett, "World Welcomes Lake Wobegon Crew Home," *Saint Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch*, January 8, 1986; Covert, "Let's Party for the Old World"; Nick Coleman, "'Companion' on TV Lost a Little, But Gained a Lot," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, April 28, 1986.

<sup>157</sup> Neal Justin, "Great (F.) Scott!—World Theater to Change Name in Honor of St. Paul-born Author," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, August 23, 1994.

<sup>158</sup> *Improvement Bulletin*, August 7, 1909, 22; *Improvement Bulletin*, November 6, 1909, 19; *Improvement Bulletin*, February 5, 1910, 24; *Improvement Bulletin*, March 5, 1910, 23; Saint Paul, Minn., Building Permit No. 53652, November 13, 1909, and Building Permit No. 54019, February 26, 1910.

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The architectural plans for the hotel, which came to be known as the Shubert Building, show a six-story edifice with a full basement. The southeast wall of the building south side of the building was angled to allow it to be flush with an existing five-story sandstone building. The plans called for five storefronts, an entrance and an exit corridor for the theater with exterior canopies, and a hotel lobby with a grand staircase, a cigar nook, and an elevator. The gallery of the theater was accessible from a set of stairs on the first floor. The basement included a rathskeller, a bar, men's and women's restrooms, a cafe, and a kitchen. The second through sixth floors were to have hotel rooms, private bathrooms, public water closets and baths, linen and maid closets, and light wells.<sup>159</sup>

While the first floor of the Shubert Building performed its intended function as retail and theater lobby space for decades, it does not appear that the upper floors were ever used as hotel rooms. Rather, they primarily served as office space. *R. L. Polk's Saint Paul City Directory* for 1911 indicates that Buechner and Orth had office space at 500 Shubert Building. The offices were appealing to professionals, such as the Leuthold and Norton Real Estate Company at 455 Shubert Building. Over the next few years, engineer G. A. Ralph, lawyer E. A. Cooper, and lawyer H. A. Irwin all leased space in the building.<sup>160</sup>

In 1913, the *Minneapolis Tribune* called the Saint Paul Shubert Theatre a financial "loser."<sup>161</sup> Benz still owned both buildings and leased the theater for \$17,500, but he certainly could not make ends meet by renting office space to his friends. He wisely leased space to state departments, most likely overflow from offices housed in the former capitol building across the street. The State Highway Commission held an office at 300 Shubert Building, and the Minnesota Public Health Association used that same office in 1923. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Fireman and Engineers and the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen had their offices in the building by the mid-1920s.<sup>162</sup>

George Benz and Sons was also involved in the construction of other buildings. In April 1911, George and his brother, Herman, paid \$1,000,000 to the estate of Levi Stewart for property on Hennepin Avenue in Minneapolis between Fourth and Fifth Streets South with plans to build a skyscraper on the site.<sup>163</sup> By 1919, "George Benz and Sons, real estate," had an office at 680 Shubert Building.<sup>164</sup> At the time of his death in 1924 at age sixty-two, the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* described George G. Benz as the "senior member of the firm of George Benz & Sons of St. Paul, extensive real estate and investment dealers."<sup>165</sup>

Late in his career, John W. Norton Sr., a key figure in Saint Paul, noted how his illustrious work in real estate began with the Benz family. "I was walking by the [Benzes'] store one day, and a son, Herman Benz,

<sup>159</sup> Buechner and Orth, "Plans of Store Hotel Bldg to Be Created on Wabasha and Exchange Strs, Geo. Benz and Sons, Owners, Saint Paul, Minnesota," architectural plans, February 24, 1910, Northwest Architectural Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

<sup>160</sup> *R. L. Polk and Company's St. Paul City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1911), 404; *R. L. Polk and Company's St. Paul City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1913), 1100, 1691; *R. L. Polk's Saint Paul City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1915), 1831, 1883–1884.

<sup>161</sup> "Curtain Rung Down on War of Theaters," *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 10, 1913.

<sup>162</sup> *R. L. Polk Company's St. Paul City Directory* (1913), 1100, 1691; "Bids—Federal Aid Project Close May 10," *Albert Lea* (Minn.) *Evening Tribune*, April 30, 1918; "Health Talks," *Appleton* (Wis.) *Post-Crescent*, July 14, 1923; *R. L. Polk and Company's Saint Paul City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1925), 255.

<sup>163</sup> "Block of Skyscrapers Is Promised to City," *Minneapolis Tribune*, April 23, 1911.

<sup>164</sup> *R. L. Polk and Company's St. Paul City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1920), 222, 1571, 1678.

<sup>165</sup> "George G. Benz, St. Paul Leader, Dies on Train."

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motioned me inside. Said he'd like to buy a piece of property on lower Seventh street [in Saint Paul] and would I take care of it." Norton went on to buy it along with other properties for the Benz family. At their peak, the Benz real estate holdings included six pieces of land on Seventh Street, various buildings in Saint Paul, the Shubert Building, the Shubert Theatre, and the Empress Theatre on Wabasha, as well as numerous properties in Minneapolis. The Shubert Building is credited as one of Norton's earliest real estate projects and "the headquarters of his enterprises, where some of the city's biggest property transactions were planned and completed."<sup>166</sup>

In 1930, the Shubert Building was well used by various businesses and organizations. Among them were dentists Harry Clarren, Orville Haarman, Joseph Martineau, Louis Quast, and the Bergensen Dental Laboratories; Frank Robbins chiropractors; "electropath" H. A. Zettel; and the Saint Paul Prescription Laboratory. Also using the building were the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, the Order of Railway Conductors, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Fireman and Engineers, and the Order of Railway Telegraphers. Various professionals were also housed in the building, including architect Kenneth M. Fullerton, construction engineer Robert Torrens, and H. C. Struchen, general contractors. George Benz and Sons Real Estate and architects Buchner and Orth continued to use office space in the building. Only three offices were listed as vacant.<sup>167</sup>

The granite columns and decorative pilasters on the first floor were removed at some point and replaced with smooth-finished concrete. Photographs dating from the late 1950s and early 1960s show the storefronts undergoing construction work and may be when this major alteration occurred [See Figures 19 and 20].

By the 1960s, the diverse usage of the Shubert Building began to disappear and the number of vacancies increased. The State Board of Criminal Apprehension took up the fifth and sixth floors of the building; the Benz Company (real estate) still functioned out of the building, and it shared office space with the Schiller Investment Group. Optometrists Zwicky and Zwicky had an office on the second floor, but many adjacent offices, as well as the entire fourth floor, were vacant. By 1962, the Benz Company had deserted the building and moved to 191 East Kellogg. Two of the storefronts were also vacant.<sup>168</sup>

The following year, the Shubert Apartments made their first appearance in the city's directory. Eleven units were located on the second through sixth floors, as well as one or two units on the first floor. Mrs. Edna Bergen managed the Shubert Apartments by 1965. In 2005, the Shubert Building was converted into the Fitzgerald Condominiums, the name taken from the renamed World Theater. The remodeling included designing eight units on each of the upper floors.<sup>169</sup> The building's concrete floors were exposed and refinished, and units were furnished with Murphy beds, giving the condominiums a "hard, urban-living feel."<sup>170</sup>

### **Architects Marshall and Fox**

<sup>166</sup> Gareth Hiebert, "Mostly John Norton—That's St. Paul's Building History," *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, March 27, 1955.

<sup>167</sup> *Polk's St. Paul (Minnesota) City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1930), 1946.

<sup>168</sup> *Polk's St. Paul (Minnesota) City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1961), reverse section, 566; *Polk's St. Paul (Minnesota) City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1962), reverse section, 466.

<sup>169</sup> *R. L. Polk's Saint Paul (Minnesota) City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1963), reverse section, 483; *Polk's Saint Paul (Ramsey County, Minn.) City Directory* (Saint Paul: R. L. Polk and Company, 1965), reverse section, 441; Eric Dunnum, "Prairie's' New Companion," *Villager*, August 24, 2005.

<sup>170</sup> Dunnum, "Prairie's' New Companion."

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Benjamin H. Marshall was born the son of a wealthy miller in Chicago in 1874. He attended the Harvard School, a prep school in Kenwood on Chicago's South Side. Although never formally educated in architecture, from 1893 to 1895, he worked as an office boy and apprentice with the firm of Marble and Wilson. After Marble's death, he became a partner in the firm, receiving a half interest in the business. In 1902, he broke away and started his own firm, which became known for theater design, including the ill-fated Iroquois Theater in Chicago. In 1905, he formed his notable partnership with Charles Fox.<sup>171</sup>

Charles Eli Fox was born in Reading, Pennsylvania, in 1870. Unlike Marshall, he received a formal education, studying at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before moving to Chicago. There he worked in the architectural firm of Holabird and Roche as a steel specialist from 1891 to 1905. When partnered with Marshall, Fox worked as a construction specialist and project manager, complementing Marshall's role as designer and entrepreneur.<sup>172</sup>

Although Marshall and Fox designed a variety of building types, their work around the Chicago area on high-rises such as The Breakers (1911) and Stewart Apartment Building (1912), as well as on luxury hotels with terra cotta facades, such as the Blackstone (1908) and the Drake (1919), brought prestige to the architectural firm. Outside Chicago, Marshall's work included the Maxine Elliott Theatre in New York City, the Forrest Theatre in Philadelphia, and the Edgewater Gulf Hotel in Biloxi, Mississippi. After Fox's death in 1926, Marshall continued his work in the field until 1935, when his chief architect, Lewis B. Walton, took over the firm. Marshall died in 1944 after suffering from a heart ailment.<sup>173</sup>

### **Architects Buechner and Orth**

Charles Buechner was born in Darmstadt, Germany, on April 27, 1859, the son of Carl Ernst and Josephine (Buchs) Buechner. His early education took place in Germany and France and was completed in Solothurn, Switzerland, before his immigration to the United States around 1874. It was also around this time that he came to Saint Paul to work as a surveyor for the Saint Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway, and he soon moved into railroad engineering work.<sup>174</sup>

About this period in his life, the writer of Buechner's obituary opined, "Through determination and perseverance he worked himself to the position of superintendent of tracks, bridges and buildings for the Northern Pacific and after firmly establishing himself in railroad work he dropped his prospects for a brilliant future in this line to begin over again in his chosen profession of architecture."<sup>175</sup> With this change in his career, Buechner undertook an architectural apprenticeship in the office of Clarence H. Johnston from 1883 to 1891, before forming Buechner and Jacobson with John J. Jacobsen. After Jacobsen's death in 1902, he formed a partnership with Henry Orth.<sup>176</sup>

<sup>171</sup> "Benj. H. Marshall, Leading Architect," *New York Times*, June 20, 1944; Texas Archival Resources Online, "Marshall and Fox: An Inventory of Their Drawings and Records, 1900–1959," <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utaaa/00003/aaa-00003.html> (accessed February 3, 2010).

<sup>172</sup> "Marshall and Fox: An Inventory of Their Drawings and Records, 1900–1959."

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.; "Benj. H. Marshall, Leading Architect."

<sup>174</sup> "Charles Buechner, Architect, Is Dead," *Saint Paul Dispatch*, August 13, 1924; Alan K. Lathrop, *Minnesota Architects: A Biographical Dictionary* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, forthcoming); 1920 United States Federal Census. Second Precinct, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota, 11A.

<sup>175</sup> "Charles Buechner, Architect, Is Dead."

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.; Lathrop, *Minnesota Architects*.

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Henry W. Orth was born in Norway on April 14, 1866, but his family immigrated to the United States when he was two years old. The location of their original settlement is unknown, but by 1880, the family was residing in Minneapolis. Orth later attended business school. In 1891, he had a brief business partnership with Edwin Overmine in Minneapolis. He moved to Austin, Minnesota, in 1896 and began a partnership with Frank W. Kinney. The two men transferred their firm to Saint Paul, but it ended in 1902. During his career, he was a member of the Saint Paul Chapter of American Institute of Architects and Minnesota Association of Architects, and he was among the first architects to be registered in Minnesota. He also served as president of the Minneapolis Brewing Company (later the Grain Belt Brewing Company), which is most likely how he knew George Benz Jr.<sup>177</sup>

During their partnership, Buechner and Orth designed the Northwestern Furniture Exposition Building (1906), the Masonic Temple (1910), and the Orpheum Theater (1916)—all in Saint Paul. The firm became well known for designing public buildings, especially courthouses. Buechner designed the Lac Qui Parle Courthouse House (1899) during his partnership with Jacobsen.<sup>178</sup> Other buildings include the Pierce County Courthouse (Wis., 1905), Jackson County Courthouse (Minn., 1908), Deuel County Courthouse (S.D., 1916), McIntosh County Courthouse (N.D., 1919), Otter Tail County Courthouse (Minn., 1921), and the McPherson County Courthouse (S. D., 1927).<sup>179</sup> Many of these courthouses, like the Shubert Building, were “designed in a somewhat subdued version of Beaux Arts Neo-Classicism” and many had “columns and pilasters with Corinthian capitals.”<sup>180</sup>

Buechner died of a stroke in August 1924 at the age of sixty-five after working as an architect in Saint Paul for forty-two years and with Orth for twenty-two years. At the time of this death, the firm had its office in the Shubert Building, a building of its own design. After his death, Orth continued working privately and in a partnership with Phillip C. Bettenberg and Company, Architects and Engineers, on a variety of church projects. Orth died in 1946 at the age of seventy-nine.<sup>181</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Saint Paul’s Sam S. Shubert Theatre is an excellent representation of the Shubert empire, which dominated the American theatrical landscape in the early twentieth century. Built to showcase the Shubert brothers’ brand of legitimate theatre, the theater incorporated state-of-the-art features to make it as fireproof as possible. The use of concrete and steel in its construction allowed for the creation of a dynamic, patron-friendly interior with the Shuberts’ characteristic second balcony. Built during the Shuberts’ peak of expansion, Saint Paul’s Shubert Theatre served as the city’s first permanent home for legitimate theater. The Shubert Theatre survives as an architectural gem that is a key component of Saint Paul’s entertainment history.

<sup>177</sup> Lathrop, *Minnesota Architects*; 1880 United States Federal Census, City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota, 29; “Henry W. Orth,” obituary, *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, March 7, 1946.

<sup>178</sup> Lathrop, *Minnesota Architects*; *Western Architect* 16:5 (November 1910): plate; Larry Millett, *AIA Guide to the Twin Cities* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2007), 337, 504; Kurt P. Schweigert, “Beuchner and Orth’s Courthouses in North Dakota,” 1980, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, available at the State Historic Preservation Office, North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Bismarck, North Dakota.

<sup>179</sup> Schweigert, “Beuchner and Orth’s Courthouses in North Dakota”; Park Net, “National Register Information System,” <http://www.nr.nps.gov/nrloc1.htm> (accessed February 4, 2010).

<sup>180</sup> Schweigert, “Beuchner and Orth’s Courthouses in North Dakota.”

<sup>181</sup> “Charles Buechner, Architect, Is Dead”; “Henry W. Orth”; Lathrop, *Minnesota Architects*.

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Ramsey County, Minnesota  
County and State

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- "Sam S. Shubert Dies a Victim of the Wreck." *New York Times*, May 13, 1905.
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- "St. Paul's New Theater Row." *Saint Paul Dispatch*, May 3, 1909.
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- Stelling, Lucille Johnsen. "Welcome to the New World." *Saint Paul Skyway News*, April 23, 1986.
- "Theater's Architect Talks." *New York Times*, December 31, 1903.
- "Variety in Summer Shows May Be Seen at Shubert." *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 11, 1913.
- "World Theater Shows New Togs." *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, October 14, 1933.
- World Theater advertisements. *Saint Paul Dispatch*, September 3, 1954, October 11 and October 13, 1933.
- World Theater advertisements. *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, August 2, 1952, August 8, 1952, July 17, 1956, July 18, 1956, August 1, 1958, and July 24, 1959.

### Online Sources

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[http://americanpublicmediagroup.publicradio.org/corpdocs/ftc\\_articles.pdf](http://americanpublicmediagroup.publicradio.org/corpdocs/ftc_articles.pdf)

Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building  
Name of Property

Ramsey County, Minnesota  
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Park Net. "National Register Information System." <http://www.nr.nps.gov/nrloc1.htm>.

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Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building  
Name of Property

Ramsey County, Minnesota  
County and State

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: Northwest Architectural Archives  
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_MN SHPO—Shubert Theatre RA-SPC-5452; Shubert Building RA-SPC-5451

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

St. Paul East, Minn.  
1967, Revised 1993

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>492333</u>	<u>4977290</u>	3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lots 4, 5, 6, and a vacated street lot 3, block 7, Bazille and Guerin's Addition to Saint Paul Proper.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries includes the area historically associated with the Shubert Theatre, including both buildings and the covered light well occupying a vacated street along the northeast wall of the theater.



Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building  
Name of Property

Ramsey County, Minnesota  
County and State

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stephanie K. Atwood, Penny Petersen, and Charlene K. Roise, Historians  
organization Hess, Roise and Company date March 19, 2010  
street & number 100 North First Street telephone (612) 338-1987  
city or town Minneapolis state MN zip code 55401  
e-mail roise@hessroise.com

---

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

---

### Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building  
City or Vicinity: Saint Paul  
County: Ramsey County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Stephanie K. Atwood  
Date of Photograph: January 2010

MN\_RamseyCounty\_ShubertTheaterandBldg\_0001  
Northwest (front) facade of Shubert Theatre. View to southwest.

Name of Property: Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building  
City or Vicinity: Saint Paul  
County: Ramsey County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Stephanie K. Atwood  
Date of Photograph: January 2010

MN\_RamseyCounty\_ShubertTheaterandBldg\_0002  
Southwest and northwest walls of Shubert Building (right) and northwest (front) facade of Shubert Theatre. View to east.

Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building

Ramsey County, Minnesota  
County and State

Name of Property

Name of Property: Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building  
City or Vicinity: Saint Paul  
County: Ramsey County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Stephanie K. Atwood  
Date of Photograph: January 2010

MN\_RamseyCounty\_ShubertTheaterandBldg\_0003

Southwest and southeast walls of Shubert Building and southeast (rear) wall of Shubert Theatre. View to north.

Name of Property: Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building  
City or Vicinity: Saint Paul  
County: Ramsey County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Stephanie K. Atwood  
Date of Photograph: January 2010

MN\_RamseyCounty\_ShubertTheaterandBldg\_0004

Entrance lobby of Shubert Theatre showing Exchange Street entrances at left and coffered ceiling. View to southwest.

Name of Property: Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building  
City or Vicinity: Saint Paul  
County: Ramsey County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Stephanie K. Atwood  
Date of Photograph: January 2010

MN\_RamseyCounty\_ShubertTheaterandBldg\_0005

Box office area in Shubert Building showing archway from former Wabasha Street lobby. View to southwest.

Name of Property: Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building  
City or Vicinity: Saint Paul  
County: Ramsey County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Stephanie K. Atwood  
Date of Photograph: January 2010

MN\_RamseyCounty\_ShubertTheaterandBldg\_0006

Main corridor of Shubert Theatre. View to northeast.

Name of Property: Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building  
City or Vicinity: Saint Paul  
County: Ramsey County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Stephanie K. Atwood  
Date of Photograph: January 2010

MN\_RamseyCounty\_ShubertTheaterandBldg\_0007

Main floor, balcony and gallery. View to northwest from stage.

Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building  
Name of Property

Ramsey County, Minnesota  
County and State

Name of Property: Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building  
City or Vicinity: Saint Paul  
County: Ramsey County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Stephanie K. Atwood  
Date of Photograph: January 2010

MN\_RamseyCounty\_ShubertTheaterandBldg\_0008  
View of stage and proscenium arch from gallery. View to southeast.

Name of Property: Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building  
City or Vicinity: Saint Paul  
County: Ramsey County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Stephanie K. Atwood  
Date of Photograph: January 2010

MN\_RamseyCounty\_ShubertTheaterandBldg\_0009  
Box seats and fire exits on northeast wall of main auditorium. View to northeast.

Name of Property: Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building  
City or Vicinity: Saint Paul  
County: Ramsey County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Stephanie K. Atwood  
Date of Photograph: January 2010

MN\_RamseyCounty\_ShubertTheaterandBldg\_0010  
Balcony and gallery. View to southwest.

Name of Property: Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building  
City or Vicinity: Saint Paul  
County: Ramsey County  
State: Minnesota  
Name of Photographer: Stephanie K. Atwood  
Date of Photograph: January 2010

MN\_RamseyCounty\_ShubertTheaterandBldg\_0011  
Enclosed alleyway on northeast wall of Shubert Theater. View to southeast.

Sam S. Shubert Theatre and Shubert Building  
Name of Property

Ramsey County, Minnesota  
County and State

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**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

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(See Attached)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Additional Information

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### INDEX OF FIGURES

**Figure 1.** The Shubert Theatre (left) and Shubert Building (center), c. 1910. (Minnesota Historical Society Collections)

**Figure 2.** The Shubert Theatre (left) and Shubert Building (center), 1962. (Minnesota Historical Society Collections)

**Figure 3.** Jacob J. Shubert. (McNamara, *Shuberts of Broadway*, page 9)

**Figure 4.** Sam Shubert. (McNamara, *Shuberts of Broadway*, page 9)

**Figure 5.** Lee Shubert. (McNamara, *Shuberts of Broadway*, page 9)

**Figure 6.** East Exchange Street facade of Shubert Theatre, c. 1910s. (Minnesota Historical Society Collection photograph reprinted in Andrus, "A History of the Legitimate Theater in St. Paul, Minnesota from 1918 to 1939")

**Figure 7.** Photograph showing boxes in theater at the time of its opening. (John Day, "Sam S. Shubert Theater Ready to Open," *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, August 27, 1910)

**Figure 8.** The fire escape on the theater's east wall. (John Day, "Sam S. Shubert Theater Ready to Open," *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, August 27, 1910)

**Figure 9.** The main auditorium, 1910. (John Day, "Sam S. Shubert Theater Ready to Open," *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, August 27, 1910)

**Figure 10.** The Wabasha Street lobby. The doors to enter the auditorium are at center rear. (John Day, "Sam S. Shubert Theater Ready to Open," *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, August 27, 1910)

**Figure 11.** The curved rear wall of the Maxine Elliott Theater's auditorium. ("Maxine Elliott's Theater, New York.")

**Figure 12.** The curved rear wall of the Shubert Theater's auditorium. (John Day, "Sam S. Shubert Theater Ready to Open," *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, August 27, 1910)

**Figure 13.** Advertisement announcing the reopening of the Shubert Theatre and its return to legitimate theater. (*Saint Paul Daily News*, October 4, 1930)

**Figure 14.** Advertisement announcing the Shubert Theatre's rebirth as the World. (*Saint Paul Dispatch*, October 13, 1933)

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**Figure 15.** The southwest and rear walls of the auditorium after the 1933 remodeling. The loges with armchairs and sofas are visible at bottom right. The loge that remained during the 1930 remodeling has been converted into a light holder (left). (Northwest Architectural Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis)

**Figure 16.** The southwest and front of the auditorium of the theater after the 1933 remodeling. (Northwest Architectural Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis)

**Figure 17.** The Wabasha lobby after the 1933 remodeling. (Northwest Architectural Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis)

**Figure 18.** The curved corridor created at the rear of the auditorium during the 1933 remodeling. (Minnesota Historical Society)

**Figure 19.** 1954 photograph of Wabasha Street entryway showing the 1933 marquee and storefronts of the Shubert Building. (Northwest Architectural Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis)

**Figure 20.** 1962 photograph showing the Wabasha Street entryway and the vacant lot used for parking space on the opposite side of the Exchange Street. (Northwest Architectural Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis)

**Figure 21.** Undated photograph showing the pre-1986 rehabilitation appearance of the Wabasha Street lobby. (Mike Langberg, "Paying for World Half the Way Home," *Saint Paul Pioneer Press and Dispatch*, April 26, 1986)

**Figure 22.** Theatergoers line up at the Wabasha Street lobby's entry underneath Liebenberg and Kaplan's zigzag marquee. ("The World Theater Grand Opening, April 1986," program commemorating 1986 reopening of World Theater, page 7)

**Figure 23.** 1980 photograph of auditorium showing wood paneling covering box seat area. ("The Orpheum and Shubert/World Theaters for the Performing Arts: A Renovation Feasibility Study," page 11)

**Figure 24.** 1980 photograph of auditorium showing false ceiling that concealed gallery and projection booth at the rear of the balcony. (The Orpheum and Shubert/World Theaters for the Performing Arts: A Renovation Feasibility Study," page 12)

**Figure 25.** Photograph from about 1985 showing the auditorium after the removal of the false ceiling. The loges from the 1933 remodeling are visible (bottom left). The paint scheme and wallpaper in the gallery may date from the 1930 remodeling. A projection booth sits at the center rear of the gallery. (Minnesota Public Radio Archives)

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**Figure 26.** Photograph from about 1985 showing the auditorium after the removal of the 1950s wall coverings. The archway with the broken pediment and urn motif is visible at center. (Minnesota Public Radio Archives)

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National Park Service

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## Additional Information

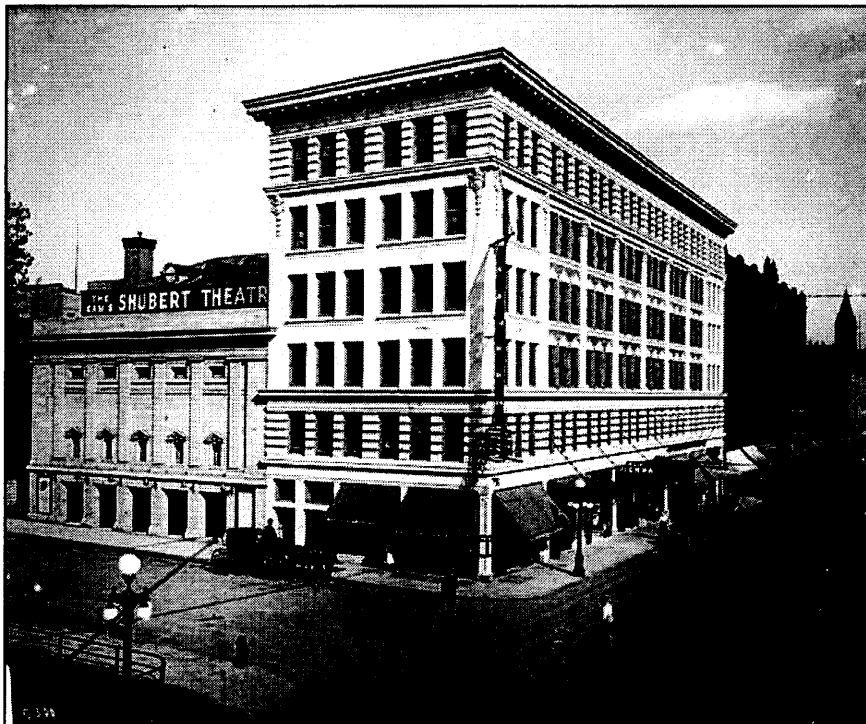


Figure 1.



Figure 2.



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Figure 3.

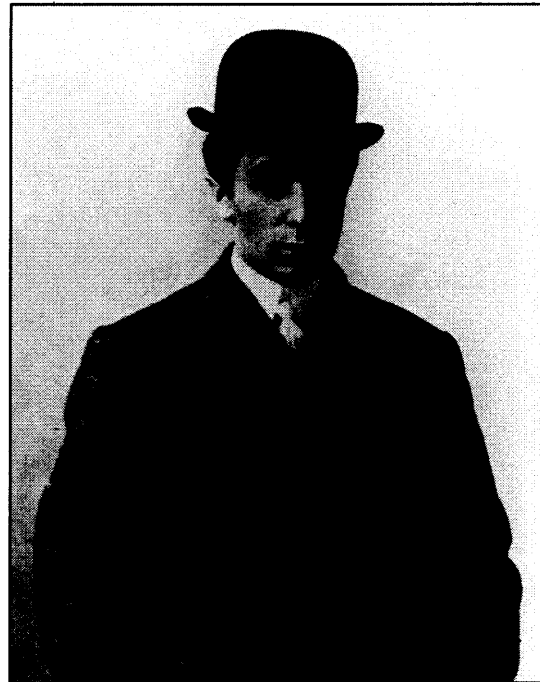


Figure 4.



Figure 5.

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## Additional Information

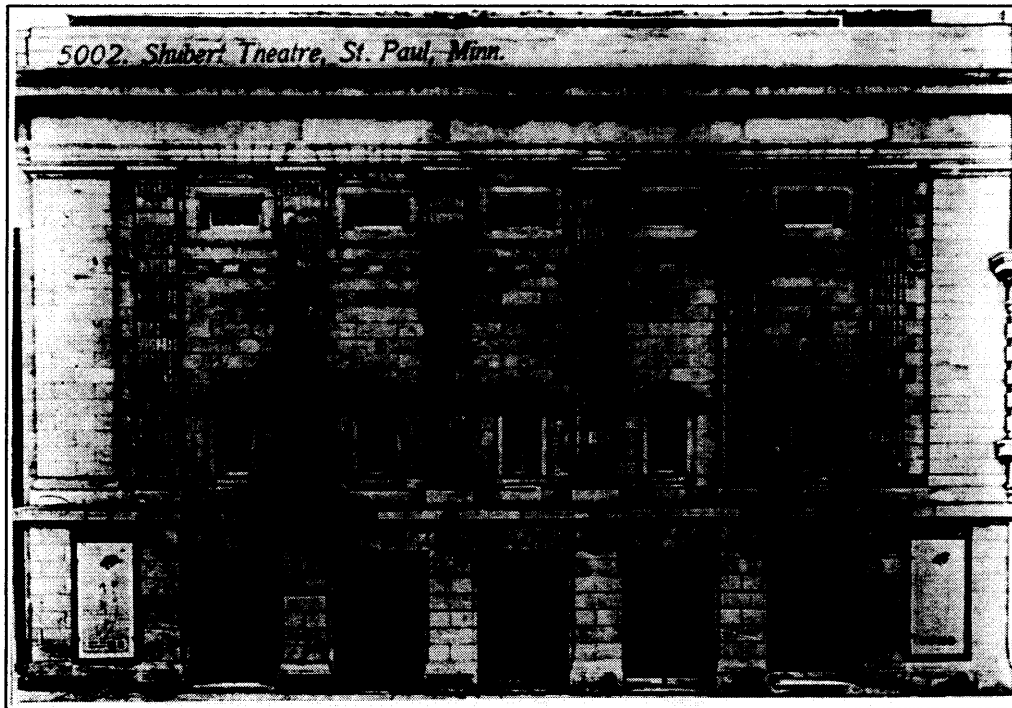


Figure 6.

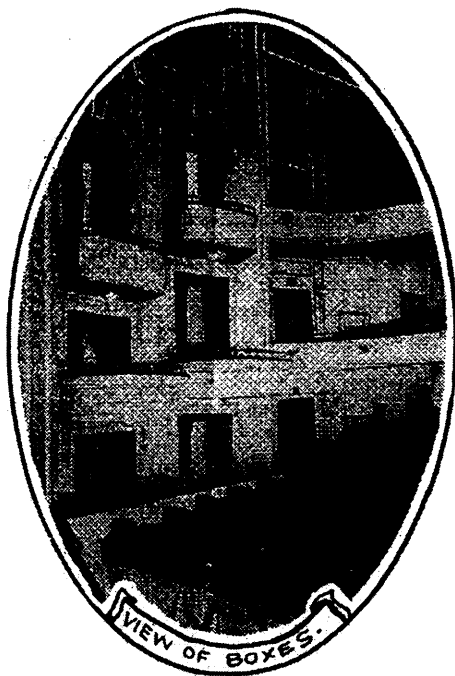


Figure 7.



Figure 8.

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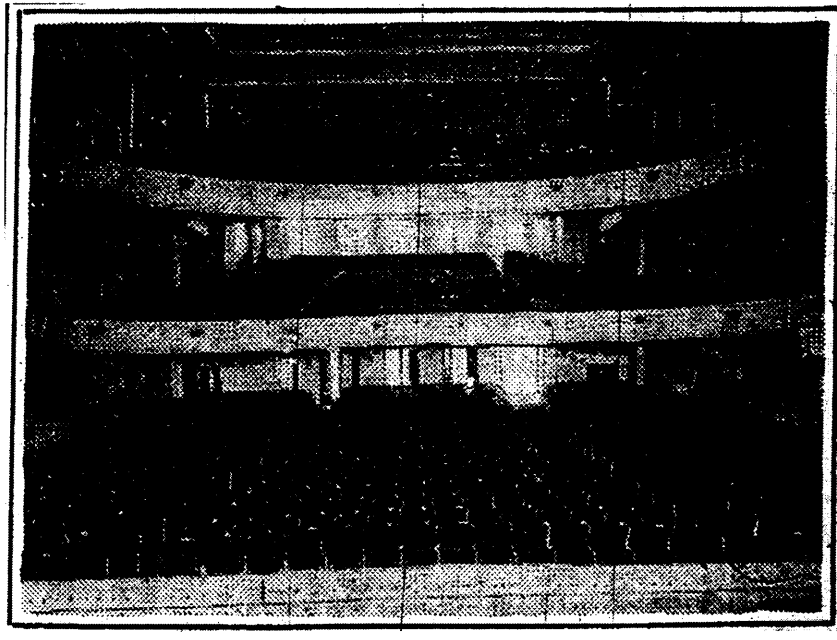


Figure 9.

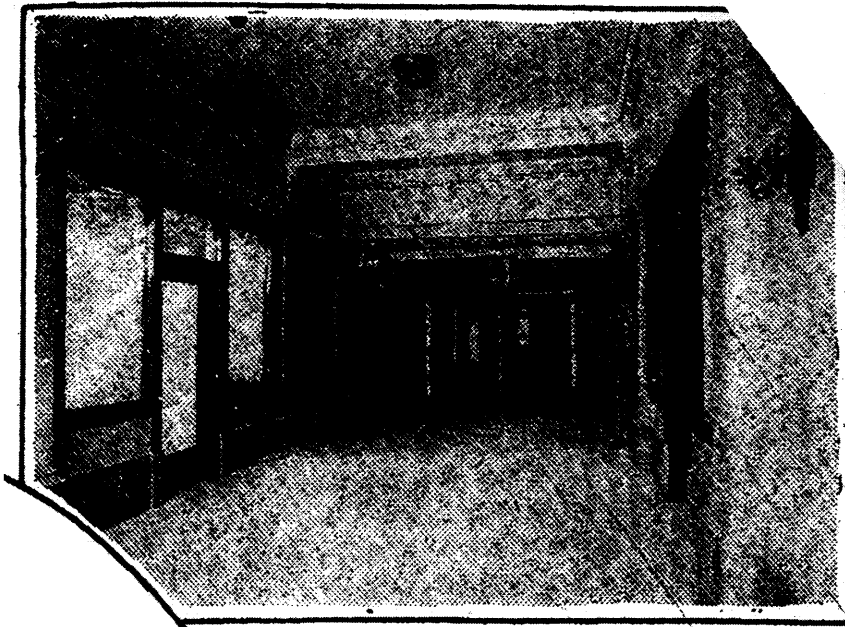


Figure 10.

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Continuation Sheet

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Figure 11.

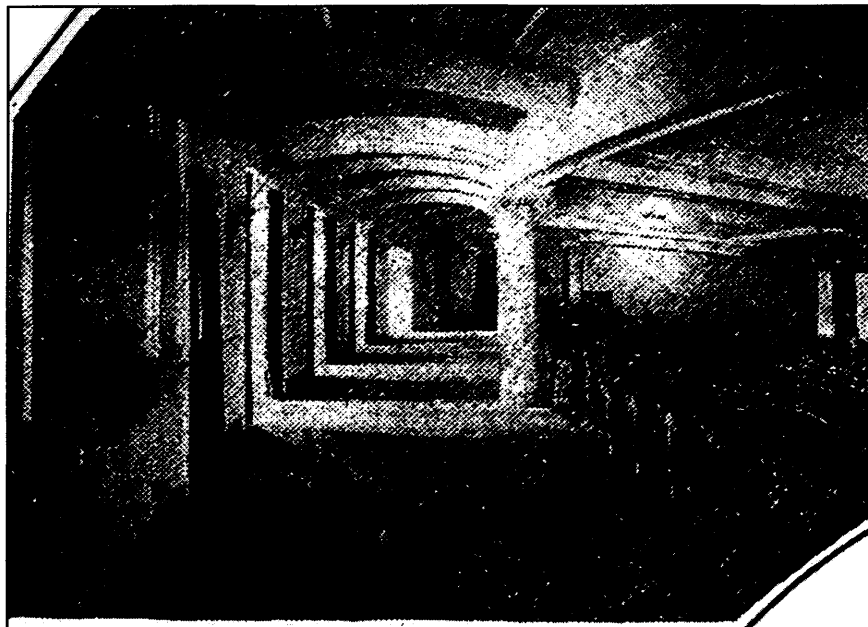


Figure 12.

United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation Sheet

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Additional Information

**TONIGHT**

**GRAND OPENING OF THE NEW SHUBERT THEATRE**  
(Wabasha and Exchange Streets)

*The Home of Super Stock Productions  
Under the Personal Direction of*  
**ARTHUR HOEMAN**

STARTING TONIGHT FOR ONE WEEK  
**"NANCY'S PRIVATE AFFAIR"**  
*A Mine of Matrimonial Merriment. Presented by*  
MARY NEWTON and EMMETT VOGAN  
*With an entire New York cast.*

\$30,000.00 has been expended on the Shubert  
to provide for theatre-goers a playhouse in  
which to enjoy in surroundings of  
**BEAUTY—COMFORT AND REFINEMENT.**  
The Finest Offerings of the Legitimate Stage.

Box Office Open Daily      Eve. Prices 25c-50c-75c-\$1.00  
9:00 A. M. to 9 P. M.      Mats. Sun, Thurs., Sat. 25c-50c  
Phones GAR. 4371-4372      Evening Curtains 8:30. Mat. 2:30

Order your reservations *now*  
and make *this* beautiful theatre  
**YOUR HOME OF ENTERTAINMENT**

Figure 13.

Figure 14.

*The Great Event of the Northwest*  
Be Among the Throngs Who Will See This Palace of Dreams  
Reveal Its Gorgeous Beauty to All St. Paul.

**WORLD**  
GA. 2024  
Wabasha at Exchange

**Opens Tomorrow at 11:45 A. M.**  
Splendor Beyond Compare . . . Yet Creating an Atmosphere  
of Refined Intimacy.

THE INAUGURAL PROGRAM

**"The Good Companions"**

From the novel by  
**J. B. PRIESTLEY**  
with  
**JESSIE MATTHEWS**

Join the crowd of good companions  
. . . take the open road to romance, joy and adventure . . . in  
this cheerful, zestful, musical production.

Continuous 11:45 A. M. Until Midnight  
—Prices—  
11:45 Until 2:00 25c    2:00 Until 6:30 35c  
Loges 50c                    Loges 50c  
After 6:30 . . . . . 50c  
Loges 75c  
Loge Chairs (Smoking Permitted) May Be Reserved in Advance



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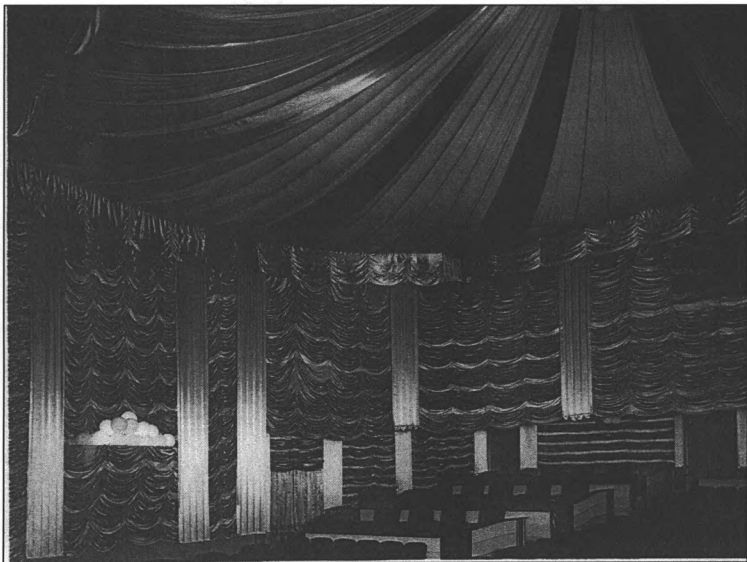


Figure 15.

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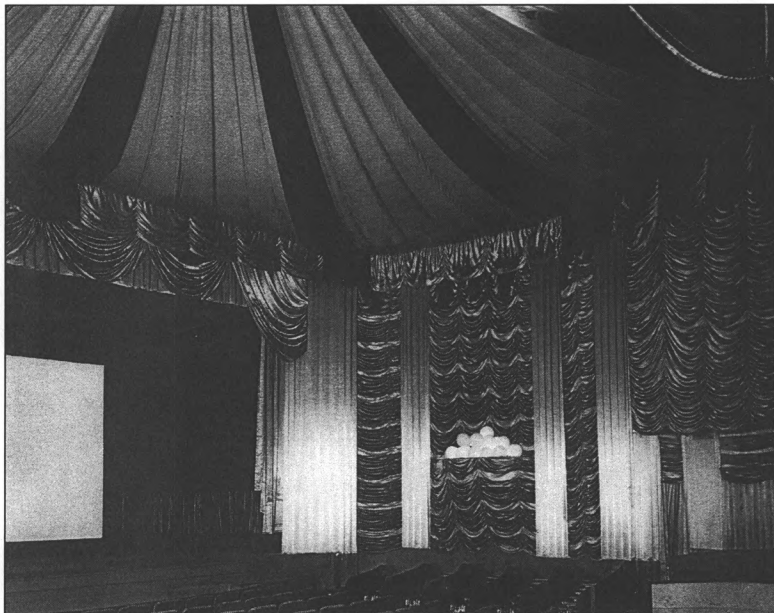


Figure 16.

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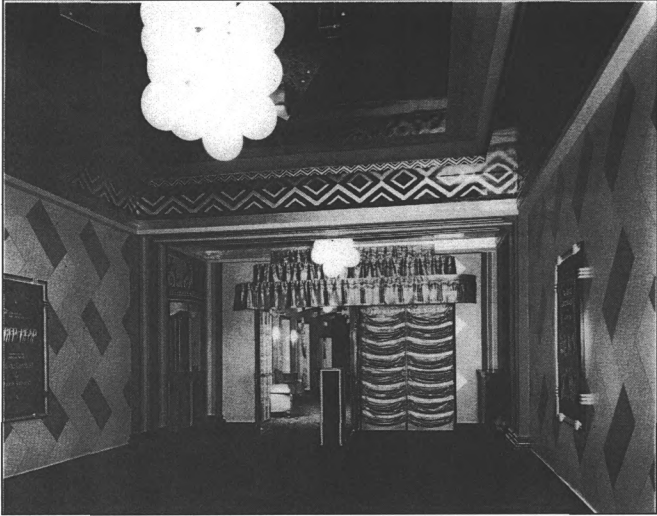


Figure 17.



Figure 18.



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Figure 19.

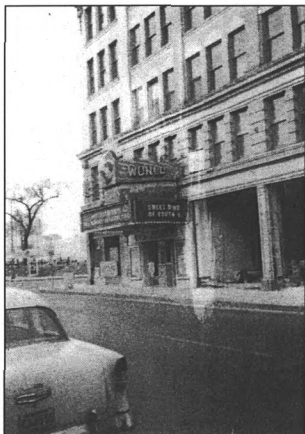


Figure 20.

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National Park Service

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### Additional Information



Figure 21.

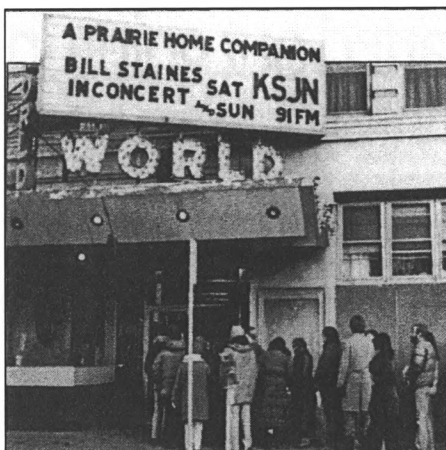


Figure 22.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Figure 23.

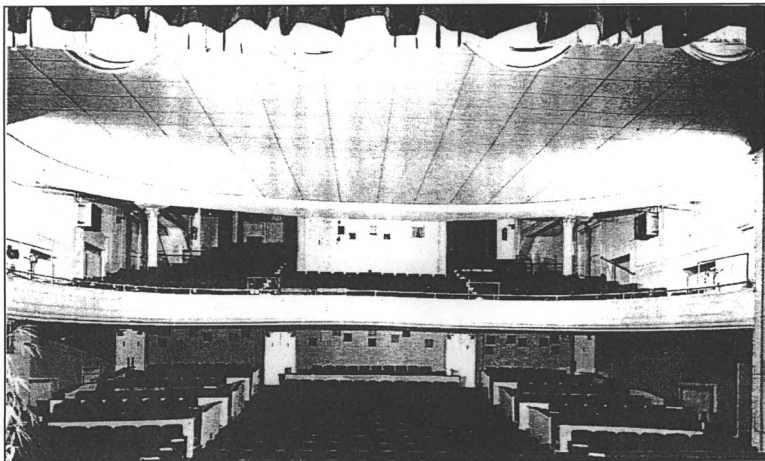


Figure 24.

United States Department of the Interior  
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Figure 25.

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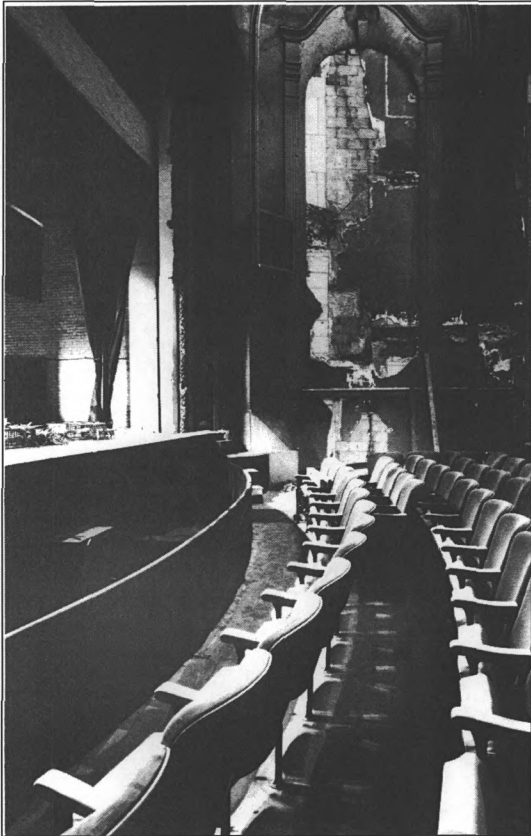
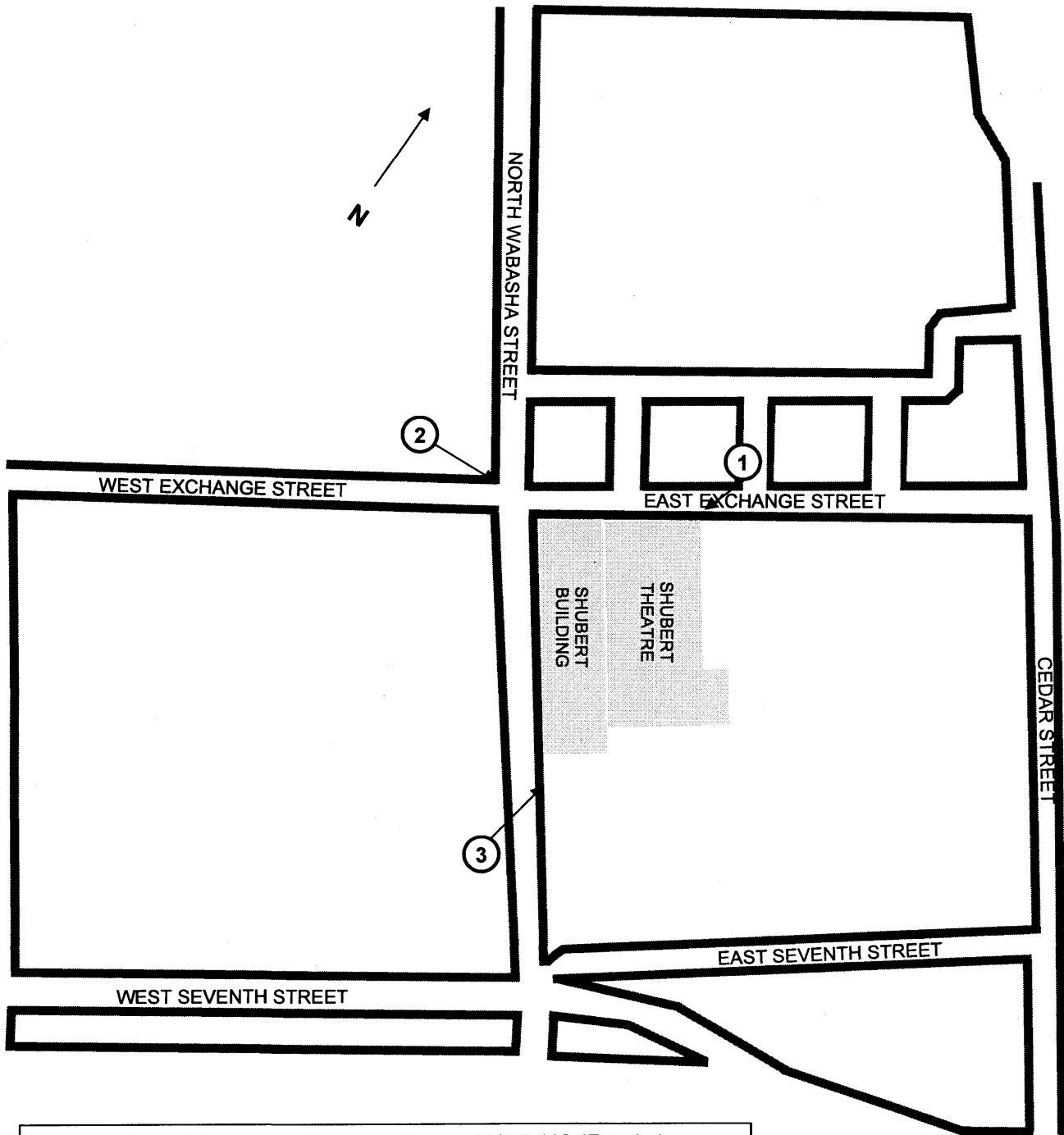


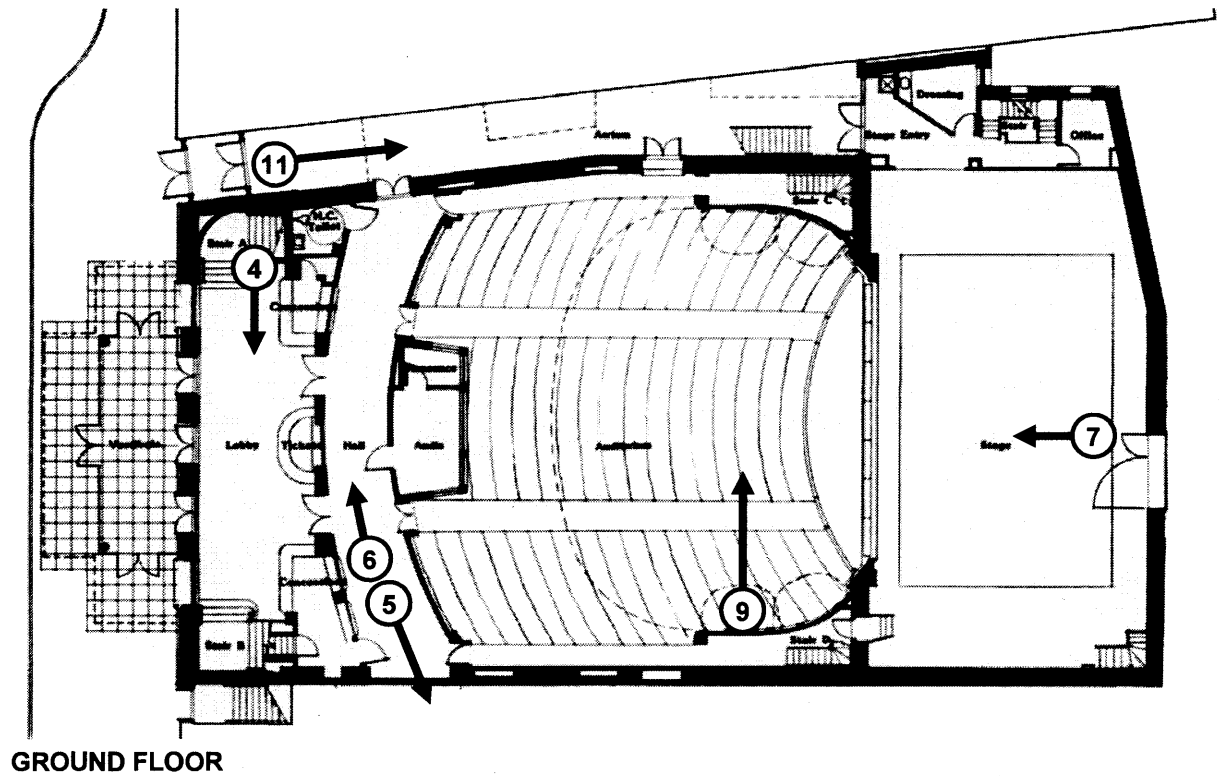
Figure 26.



SAM S. SHUBERT THEATRE AND SHUBERT BUILDING (Exterior)  
 Saint Paul  
 Ramsey County  
 Minnesota  
 Photographer: Stephanie K. Atwood  
 January 2010

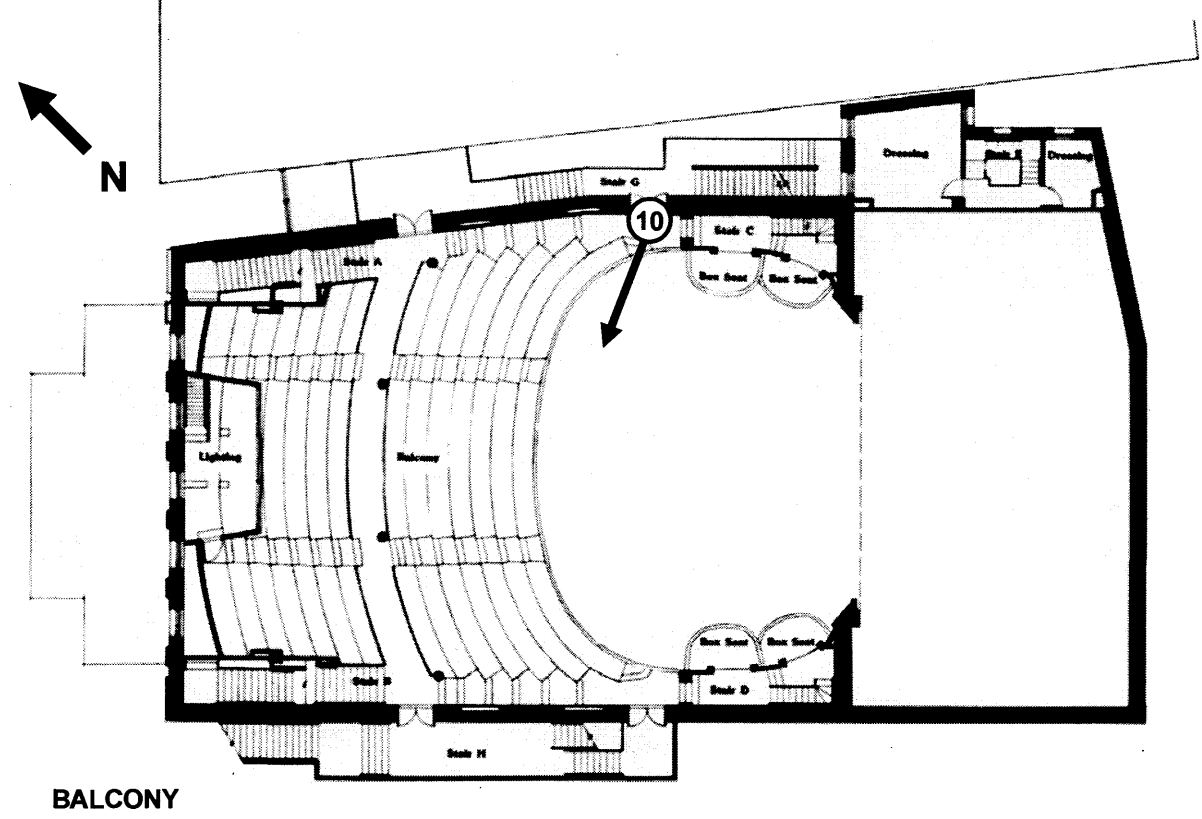
Photo Key

EAST EXCHANGE STREET



GROUND FLOOR

EAST EXCHANGE STREET

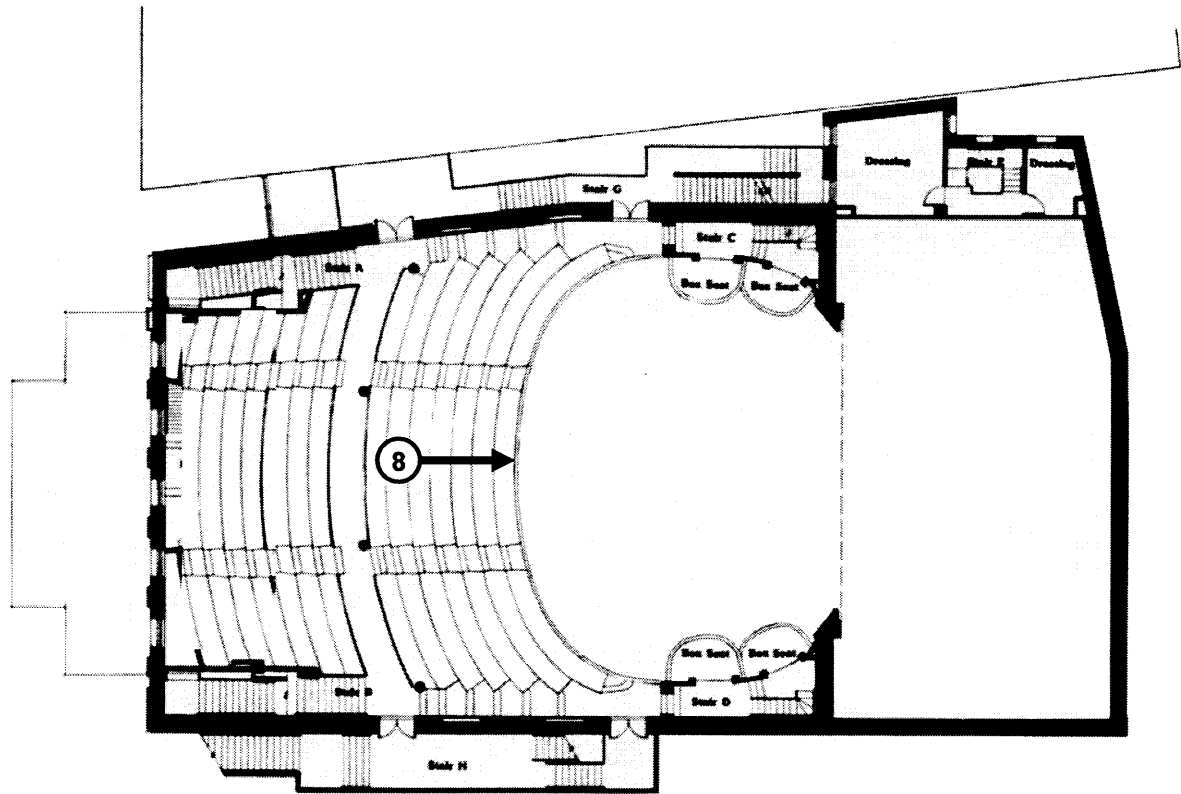


BALCONY

SAM S. SHUBERT THEATRE (Interior)  
 Saint Paul  
 Ramsey County  
 Minnesota  
 Photographer: Stephanie K. Atwood  
 January 2010

Photo Key

EAST EXCHANGE STREET



GALLERY



SAM S. SHUBERT THEATRE (Interior)  
Saint Paul  
Ramsey County  
Minnesota  
Photographer: Stephanie K. Atwood  
January 2010

Photo Key