

Austin History Center

1.

PARAMOUNT, INC.

P. O. BOX 1205
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78767

PARAMOUNT THEATER
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

NOTE:

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A STUDY GUIDE
PREPARED DECEMBER 10, 1974

Austin History Center

THE PARAMOUNT CORPORATION: "THE PAST REVISITED"

Paramount Inc. became reality on the 13th day of December, 1973. The current officers are John M. Bernardoni, Stephen L. Scott and Charles Eckerman.

The Paramount Corporation was conceived in order that we might lay the groundwork for the revamping and rebirth of one of the greatest Vaudeville theaters in the State of Texas. Among the many functions the Paramount Corporation plans to deal in, will be the establishment of a performing arts center, which Austinites duly deserve. Because of the rigorous schedule that theater management demands, professional talent will be engaged to insure that the Paramount Theater For The Performing Arts will always achieve a standard of excellence surpassed by none. For example, the directors have chosen to bring the top entertainment in this country--major ballets, symphonies, Broadway plays, individual performers, chamber music and the like--as well as producing ten shows annually which will originate in Austin. There will, in addition, be a touring company which will perform these ten shows in various cities throughout the tri-State area. In order to serve these well known groups, properly, it will be necessary to engage the most talented individuals in the business. A close association with the Austin Civic Ballet and the Austin Symphony Orchestra will be maintained so that they might have more suitable accommodations within which they may perform their varied talents.

Our enterprise does not in any way wish to be tied in a political manner with various parties utilizing the facility to further their own gain. The theater will be fully implemented only when the performing arts can benefit, and only in those instances where truly professional theatrical groups are involved.

We would in deed be honored to have you become a key asset in this exciting adventure, laying the groundwork for a theatrical happening which each and every individual in this community can enjoy. The road ahead is terribly challenging and we will need the vocal and financial support of many individuals to insure the success of this enterprise. I only hope you and your distinguished friends will be among the founding fathers for the revitalization of the Paramount.

Sincerely,



John M. Bernardoni
President

Austin History Center

PARAMOUNT, INC.

P. O. BOX 1205
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78767

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PARAMOUNT THEATER

In 1915, the Gaiety Theater was erected, joining the already veteran theaters--the Hancock and the Smith--in what was to become an intriguing and delightfull era of Vaudeville chicanery coupled with a cast of super stars.

Although the Gaiety, which later became known as the Majestic Theater, was strongly rooted in the promotion of live acts, the film industry was already on its way to uprooting the very philosophy on which men like Louie Novy based their respective lifestyles.

As the years went by, the Majestic saw many road shows fall to the wayside during the boom years of the "talkies", and although live entertainment was prevalent during the forties, the film industry had "taken over". The Majestic was one of the few fortunates to withstand the demolition teams and their quest for progress, as Austinites saw great theaters, such as the Smith Theater and the Millett Theater crumble under the illusions created by celluloid moving at 24fps. Even those granted temporary immunity by Lady Luck found their end and the Hancock Opera House with all of its supporters failed to save the most famous theater the Southwestern United States had ever known.

Well, the history of theater in Austin is quite easily related to by many cities across the country, but they'll never replace the relaxation one gets from an evening of ballet accompanied by live orchestration. Of course, we still have an occasional performance by ballet companies and the like and I don't have to remind you where they usually perform.

Let's reflect back to a few decades ago, to those exciting first nights as well as the landmark performances by the truly great men and women of the professional theater.

How it must have seemed to have been seated aisle 4, seats 5&6, with one's girl, when the curtains opened that first night at the Hancock Opera House to witness the road show, "Forgiven". And the Majestic, in 1903, witnessing the unveiling of a song long to remain among the top ten-- The Eyes of Texas! (The show had been arranged to gather funds for the athletic dept.)

Or what of Paderwski playing his first concert to an Austin audience?

And who could forget the magnificent performance of Anna Pavlova and the world famed, Ballet Russe.

Surprisingly, the superstars were not the only ones casting their spell during the balmy summers in Texas. Remember when Judge James McClendon, circa 1900, portrayed Sis Hopkins at the Hancock?

Austin History Center

And those truly fantastic and mystifying Barrymores, I only wish I had been there.

These are just a thimble-full of the talent which has left its mark on the residents of our great city. Do you remember the following stars and the dates they appeared in Austin?

HELLEN HAYES
ORSON WELLES
ANNA PAVLOVA
SARA BERNHARDT
ANNA HELD AND THE ZIEGFELD FOLLIES
METROPOLITAN OPERA
SAN CARLO GRAND OPERA
LILLIAN RUSSEL
JOHN PHILIP SOUSA
THE BARRYMORES
GEROGE PRIMROSE
MIKAIL MORDKIN AND HIS RUSSIAN BALLET
LILLIAN GISH
CLAIR BLOOM
BERT WHEELER
ROBERT WOOLSEY
CHAS. B. HANFORD
CARRIE NATIONS
BUSTER BROWN
RUTH ST. DENNIS DANCE TROUPE
GEORGE M. COHAN
CHAUNCY OLCOTT
BASIL RATHBORNE
KATHERINE CORNELL
AL FIELDS
RICHARD MANSFIELD
GEORGE WALKER
SKINNY PRIOR,

AND ALL THE MULTITALENTED ACTS WHICH FREQUENTED AUSTIN THROUGHOUT THE YEARS!!!

Well, enough nostalgia for one day. Our historical data, with the help of many, many talks with theater-goers and technicians alike, is only a tiny time capsule bursting for an opportunity to rise up to the entertainment demands of the twenty-first century.

There's one thing you can be sure of. We've only got one true theater left---THE PARAMOUNT!

John M. Bernardoni

Austin History Center

PARAMOUNT INC.
PARAMOUNT THEATER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

I.	Investment Capital--Theater.....\$	194,864.00
	Profit on Theater.....	16,768.35
	\$ Return on Investment Before Taxes.....	8.6%
II.	Investment Capital--Club.....\$	67,560.00
	Profit on Club.....	27,206.50
	\$ Return on Investment.....	40.3%
III.	Gross Investment.....	262,424.00
	Gross Profit.....	43,974.85
	Gross Return on Investment.....	16.8%

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STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED INVESTMENT FUNDS FOR THEATER

A. <u>Cash</u> (see Schedule A).....	\$ 60,755.00
B. <u>Restoration of Theater</u> (see Schedule B).....	84,450.00
C. <u>Theater Equipment</u> (see Schedule C).....	<u>24,212.00</u>
	<u>NET INVESTMENT:</u> \$169,417.00
	<u>PLUS 15% CONTINGENCY:</u> <u>25,413.00</u>
	<u>GROSS INVESTMENT:</u> \$194,864.00

Austin History Center

SUPPLEMENTAL SCHEDULES

I. Schedule A

A. Salaries (preopening), utilities, rent, etc.....	\$ 15,200.00
B. Advertising and Promotion.....	11,000.00
C. Deposits.....	12,200.00
D. 1st. Production.....	18,655.00
E. Insurance.....	1,700.00
F. Miscellaneous.....(supplies).....	<u>2,000.00</u>
	60,755.00

II. Schedule B

A. Painting.....	\$ 15,000.00
B. Rewiring and plumbing.....	7,500.00
C. Reworking seats (1300 @ \$20/ea.).....	26,000.00
D. Carpeting (approx. 400 sq.yds.).....	4,000.00
E. Teasers and Curtain replacement.....	5,000.00
F. Boxes revamped (2).....	2,000.00
G. Brass railing (400 ft. @ \$6/ft.).....	2,400.00
H. 1st. floor facade and foyer.....	10,000.00
I. Bandshell (optional).....	-
J. Purchase of existing equipment and furniture.....	7,500.00
K. Janitorial: 10 men @ \$2/hr. @ 40 hrs.....	800.00
L. Supplies.....	1,250.00
M. Enlargement of orchestra pit.....	<u>3,000.00</u>
	\$ 84,450.00

III. Schedule C

A. Lighting Equipment

1. 25 elipsoidal E-106 @ \$66/ea.....	\$ 1,650.00
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(Schedule C, con't) **Austin History Center**

2.	50 fresnels N6-C type @ \$28/ea.....	\$ 1,400.00
3.	10 scoops L20-C type @ \$42/ea.....	420.00
4.	5 elipsoidal E-108 type @ \$85/ea.....	425.00
5.	5 elipsoidal E-109 type @ \$65/ea.....	325.00
6.	1 dimmer board (or revamp existing).....	1,000.00
7.	1 spot Super Trouper type.....	1,900.00
8.	500 feet cable @ \$.50/ft.....	250.00
9.	250 twist lock connectors @ \$2.50/set.....	625.00
10.	180 sheets Roscolene @ \$1.50/sheet.....	270.00
11.	screens:	
a.	80 CP-7 @ \$.70/ea.....	56.00
b.	5 CP-12 @ \$1.00/ea.....	5.00
c.	10 CP-18 @ \$9.00/ea.....	90.00
12.	Lamps:	
a.	10 T12 @ \$10.95/ea.....	109.50
b.	10 T12 @ \$11.95/ea.....	119.50
c.	50 T12 @ \$11.95/ea.....	597.50
d.	100 T20 @ \$14.00/ea.....	1,400.00
e.	20 1000PS52 @ \$3.45/ea.....	69.00
13.	2 Carousel slide projectors @ \$100/ea.....	200.00
		<hr/>
		\$ 10,911.50

B. Sound Equipment

1.	Reel to reel tape deck.....	\$ 200.00
2.	Turn table.....	200.00
3.	Speakers (existing).....	1,000.00
4.	Amplification.....	2,500.00
5.	Concert piano (7ft.).....	7,000.00
6.	Microphones (10 @ \$50/ea.).....	500.00
		<hr/>
		\$ 11,400.00

C. Backstage Equipment

1.	Tools.....	250.00
2.	Lumber.....	1,000.00
3.	Assorted braces, sandbags, etc.....	200.00
4.	Beaver Board.....	200.00
5.	Ladders.....	100.00
6.	Miscellaneous.....	150.50
		<hr/>
		\$ 1,900.50

Total:

24,212.00

Austin History Center

PROJECTED INCOME STATEMENT

X

I. Income

A.	Paramount Inc. Productions: 10 Musical Comedies @ 3 performances each with avg. of 1000 paid (75%) @ \$6.50/ea.....	\$ 195,000.00
B.	Paramount Inc. Productions: 10 Musical Comedies taken on the road for 8 performances with 1800 paid @ \$6.50/ea. Avg. House capacity=3000 (60%).....	936,000.00
C.	Subleased area of theater for club for \$500 per month.....	6,000.00
D.	Subleased area, currently Jewelry Store @ \$450/mo.....	5,400.00
E.	Leasing of theater to promoters, etc. @ \$500 per day, net, net, net...4 days/mo.....	24,000.00
F.	Paramount Inc. as promotor: 24 shows @ 1000 paid @ \$6/ea.....	144,000.00
G.	Film festivals: 12 films @ 6 showings ea. with 250 paid @ \$1/ea.....	18,000.00
		<u>GROSS INCOME: \$1,328,400.00</u>

II. Expense

A.	Paramount Inc. Productions: 10 Musical Comedies @ cost of \$27,467.75. See Schedule A-1.....	\$ 274,677.50
B.	Paramount Inc. Productions: 10 Musical Comedies on the road @ cost of \$57,184.68 per tour.....see Schedule B-1.....	571,846.80
C.	Paramount Inc. acting as promotor for 24 shows @ avg. cost of \$6500/show.....	156,000.00
D.	Film festivals @ cost of 25% of gross.....	4,500.00
E.	Operating Expense: see Schedule C-1.....	280,601.35
F.	Depreciation.....	2,331.00
G.	Initial Advertising (one time only).....	11,000.00
H.	Initial Docketage Equip. (one time only).....	1,900.00
I.	Commission @ 4 1/2% of gate (gate = \$195,000).....	8,775.00
		<u>GROSS EXPENSE: \$1,311,631.65</u>
<u>NET PROFIT/LOSS:</u>		\$ 16,768.35

Austin History Center

SUPPLEMENTAL SCHEDULES CON'T

IV. Schedule A-1

A. Cast of 25

1. 25 equity members @ 193/wk. @ 3 weeks rehearsal.....	\$ 14,475.00
2. 25 equity members @ \$27.57 (pro)/day for 3 performances.....	2,067.75
	16,542.75

B. Musicians

1. 15 @ 4 hours/rehearsal @ 2 rehearsals @ \$7.50/hour.....	900.00
2. 15 @ 3 hours/show @ 3 shows @ \$15/hr.....	2,025.00
	2,925.00

C. Set..... 2,500.00

D. Royalties..(avg. \$750/show)..... 2,250.00

E. Costuming...(avg. of \$100/actor)..... 2,500.00

F. Props..... 500.00

G. Furniture rental..... 250.00

\$ 27,476.75

V. Schedule B-1 (weekly)

A. <u>Cast of 25</u> @ \$27.57/day (pro).....	\$ 5,514.00
B. <u>Musicians</u> (15) @ \$40/day.....	4,800.00
C. <u>Room accommodations</u> for 40.....	3,200.00
D. <u>Asst. Director</u> @ \$35.71/day (pro).....	265.68
E. <u>Coordinator</u> @ \$50/day.....	400.00
F. <u>Transportation</u> : 5 days/8 shows @ \$245/day.....	1,225.00
G. <u>Truck rental</u> for set @ \$50/day (see F).....	250.00
H. <u>Rental of Theater</u> @ \$1100/day.....	8,800.00
I. <u>Insurance</u> @ \$100/day.....	800.00
J. <u>Advertising</u>	14,400.00
K. <u>Security</u>	400.00

(Schedule B-1) **Austin History Center**

L.	<u>Union Help</u>	1,950.00
M.	<u>Ticket Taker</u>	1,200.00
N.	<u>Royalties</u> (avg. 10% of gate).....	9,360.00
O.	<u>Ushers</u>	800.00
P.	<u>FICA</u> -(see monthly expenses)	
Q.	<u>Per diem</u> : 25 actors @ \$15/day.....	3,000.00
R.	<u>Director and Choreographer Royalties</u>	800.00
		<u>\$ 57, 184.68</u>

VI. Schedule C-1

A. Insurance (all paid annually)

1.	<u>Liability</u>	58.33
2.	<u>Workman's Comp</u>	83.33
3.	<u>Fire</u>	75.00
4.	<u>Loss Of Business, Vandalism</u>	<u>75.00</u>
		291.66

B. Maintenance

1.	<u>Electrical</u>	50.00
2.	<u>Plumbing</u>	<u>100.00</u>
		150.00

C. Advertising

1.	<u>Newspaper</u>	1,000.00
2.	<u>Television</u>	2,500.00
3.	<u>Radio</u>	1,000.00
4.	<u>Posters</u>	250.00
5.	<u>Fly Sheets</u>	100.00
6.	<u>Billboard</u>	<u>500.00</u>
		5,350.00

D. Lease (\$43,200 annually or \$3600/mo.)..... 3,600.00

E. Supplies

1.	<u>Janitorial</u>	150.00
2.	<u>Administrative</u>	150.00

(Schedule C-1, con.) **Austin History Center**

3.	<u>Backstage</u>	\$ 300.00
		<u>600.00</u>
F. Salaries		
1.	<u>Secretary/Bookkeeper</u>	450.00
2.	<u>Ticket Taker</u>	120.00
3.	<u>Concession</u>	240.00
4.	<u>Administrator</u>	1,000.00
5.	<u>Artistic Director</u>	1,000.00
	(plus 4 1/2% of gate--see income projection)	
6.	<u>Guest Director</u>	750.00
7.	<u>Lighting/Sound</u>	208.33
8.	<u>2 Sound assistants</u>	166.66
9.	<u>Stage Manager/Set Designer</u>	1,000.00
10.	<u>2 Stage Hands</u>	583.33
11.	<u>Choreographer</u>	473.92
12.	<u>Wardrobe Mistress/Teamstress</u>	406.25
13.	<u>1 Assistant to Teamstress</u>	250.00
14.	<u>Pianist/Musical Director</u>	291.66
15.	<u>5 Ushers</u>	350.00
16.	<u>Janitorial</u>	700.00
17.	<u>FICA</u>	362.75
		<u>8,352.90</u>
G. Fees		
1.	<u>Attorney</u>	50.00
2.	<u>NY</u>	50.00
		<u>100.00</u>
H. Utilities		
1.	<u>Electricity</u>	1,500.00
2.	<u>Water</u>	150.00
3.	<u>Gas</u>	250.00
4.	<u>Phone</u>	500.00
		<u>2,400.00</u>

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NET OPERATING EXPENSES: $\$ 20,844.56 \times 12$
= $\$250,134.72$

I. Equity Pass

1. 5% of gross salary (actors) to Pension Fund ($\$220,567.50 @ 5\%$).....	\$ 11,028.37
2. \$1/actor/wk. for Salary Continuence Ins.,	1,300.00
3. \$6.25/actor/wk. for Welfare.....	8,125.00
4. FICA ($\$220,567.50 @ 4.54\%$).....	<u>10,013.26</u>
	<u>30,466.63</u>

TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES: $\$280,601.35$

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STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED INVESTMENT FUNDS FOR CLUB

A. Cash (see schedule D).....	\$ 6,700.00
B. Restoration (see schedule E).....	31,700.00
C. Bar fixtures (see schedule F).....	22,260.00
D. Liquor inventory.....	5,000.00
E. Sound equipment (see schedule G).....	<u>1,900.00</u>
	gross investment: \$67,560.00

Austin History Center

PROJECTED INCOME STATEMENT

I. Revenue from sales:

- A. Gross sales from club.....\$130,000.00
(estimated volume of \$2500/wk.)
- B. Gross sales from Theater..... 51,750.00
(estimated @ 138 shows times 250
drinks sold per show @ \$1.50/ea.)

gross sales: \$181,750.00
less 10% liquor tax : 18,175.00

\$163,575.00

II. Cost of goods sold:

- A. Beginning inventory of.....\$ 5,000.00
- B. Liquor @ 30% gross..... 54,525.00
- C. Soft drinks/Condiments(5% of gross) 9,087.50
gross purchase: \$ 68,612.50
less initial inven: 5,000.00
- D. Cost of goods.....

\$ 63,612.50

Gross Margin:

\$99,962.50

III. Operating Expenses

- A. Salaries (see schedule H).....\$ 33,240.00
- B. Salaries (initial 2 mo.)..... 2,000.00
- C. FICA (4.54%)..... 1,600.00
- D. Entertainment (\$300/wk)..... 15,600.00
- E. Advertising/Promotion..... 1,600.00
- F. Depreciation (see schedule I).. 2,316.00
- G. State Liquor License..... 2,500.00
- H. Federal Liquor License..... 200.00
- I. Rent (\$500/mo. to Paramount Inc.) 6,000.00

Austin History Center

J. Charge card expense (4% @ $\frac{1}{2}$ gross) ..	\$ 2,600.00	
K. Breakage	600.00	
L. Misc. Administrative Supplies	500.00	
M. Insurance (part covered by theater)	1,000.00	
N. Utilities (covered by theater)	-	
O. Maintenance (covered by theater) ..	-	
	total operating exp:	<u>\$ 72,756.00</u>
	gross income:	<u>\$ 27,206.50</u>

Austin History Center

SUPPLEMENTAL SCHEDULES

I. Schedule D

A. Operating Cash

1. Salaries.....	\$ 2,000.00
2. Initial Advertising/Promotion.....	1,000.00
3. Liquor License-State and Federal.....	2,700.00
4. Deposits.....	500.00
5. Misc. Supplies.....	500.00
	<hr/>
	6,700.00

****note:** this cash is necessary to cover operating costs during the two months of remodeling and for advance payment on items before club is operating.

II. Schedule E

A. Restoration

1. Renovation of room.....	\$ 20,000.00
2. Painting.....	5,000.00
3. Carpet (100 sq.yds. @ \$12/yd.).....	1,200.00
4. Rest Room fixtures (\$1500/ea.).....	3,000.00
5. Removal of A/C equipment.....	2,500.00
	<hr/>
	\$ 31,700.00

III. Schedule F

A. Bar Fixtures

1. Ice machine.....	\$ 1,500.00
2. Bar sink.....	350.00
3. Refrigeration (17½ case beer capacity)...	600.00
4. Beer tap (3 keg capacity).....	850.00
5. Bar stools (12 @ \$80/ea.).....	960.00
6. Chairs (80 @ \$125/ea.).....	10,000.00
7. Tables (20 @ \$ 75/ea.).....	1,500.00
8. Bar utensils/glasses/blender, etc.....	1,000.00
9. Cash register.....	2,500.00
	<hr/>
	\$ 22,260.00

IV. Schedule G

A. Sound Equipment

1. Piano.....	\$ 1,000.00
2. Microphones/stands.....	200.00
3. Amplifier.....	250.00
4. Speakers.....	450.00
	<hr/>
	1,900.00

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V. Schedule H

A. Itemized Salaries

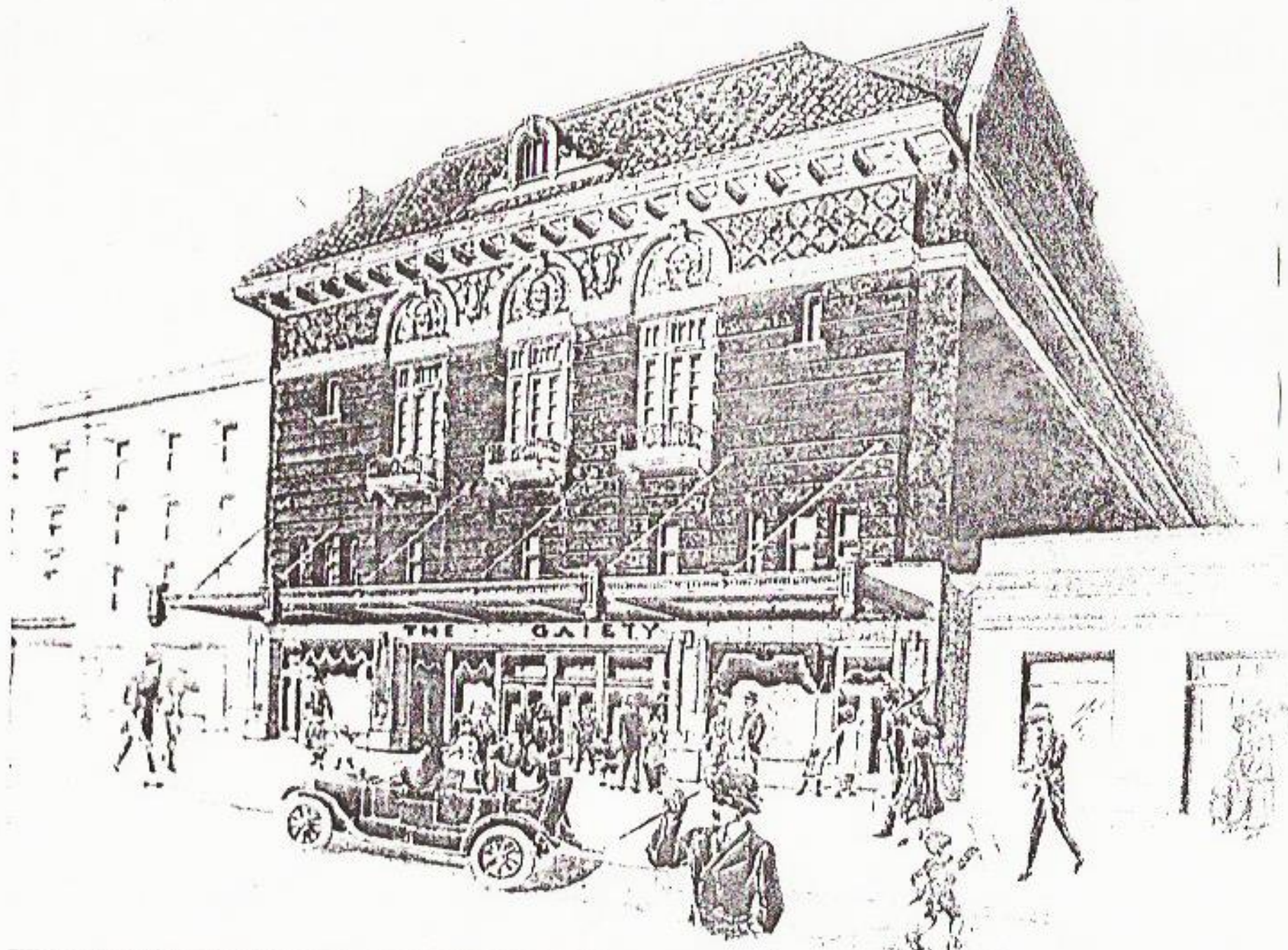
1. Manager.....	\$ 12,000.00
2. Asst. Manager/bartender.....	9,000.00
3. Bartender.....	6,000.00
4. Bartender (part time).....	2,400.00
5. Bartenders (theater, 2 @ 60 hrs./mo. @ \$2/hr.).....	1,440.00
6. Barmaids (\$100 hrs./wk. @ \$2/hr.).....	2,400.00
	<u>\$ 33,240.00</u>

VI. Schedule I

A. Depreciation

1. Bar equipment.....	\$ 2,126.00
2. Sound equipment.....	190.00
	<u>2,316.00</u>

**note: straight line, 10 years.



Austin History Center

Paramount's Fate

By MARJORIE HOFFMAN
Amusements Staff

Since 1915 when it was known as the Gaiety, the Paramount Theater at 713 N. Congress has intrigued frequenters and passers-by with its entertainment and unique facade.

Recently, another kind of interest has been growing in the old vaudeville landmark, involving both the past and the future of the movie theater.

Businessmen and citizen groups, whose ideas sometimes conflict with one another, are advocating various proposals for the use of the Paramount when its current lease runs out in 1975. No matter who takes over the new lease, the theater will not be quite the same as it appears now on the avenue.

Above the street-level poster panels and its brightly lit marquee, three carved stone faces, bearded and laughing, stare out from the arcs positioned over three multi-paned windows.

A smockinesque effect tops the horizontal lines on the main portion of the building's front.

In contrast to both of these designs is a layered tile roof rippling downward to meet a stone ledge supported by 20 beams across the face of the structure.

The huge canopy, attached by steel rods to the facade, shelters strollers on the sidewalk below and has through the years announced the changing names of the theater from Gaiety to Majestic to Paramount.

Designed by architect George A. Andress and built by Ernest Nalle of Austin and contractor J.F. Johnson of Denton, the Paramount originally was constructed to house the various vaudeville and minstrel shows which poured into the city throughout the early 20th century.

Except for the addition of the marquee, the building stands today as it was initially designed.

But the interior changed drastically in 1930 when the structure was completely gutted. The art deco style of the '30s in which it was refurbished remains in the theater still. Gigantic silk panels line the walls with multi-colored reliefs on the ceiling panels, and the proscenium is laden with elaborate ornamentation.

A large pipe organ, once used to provide background music for silent motion pictures, was removed in 1930, but the same wooden floors prevail in the balcony.

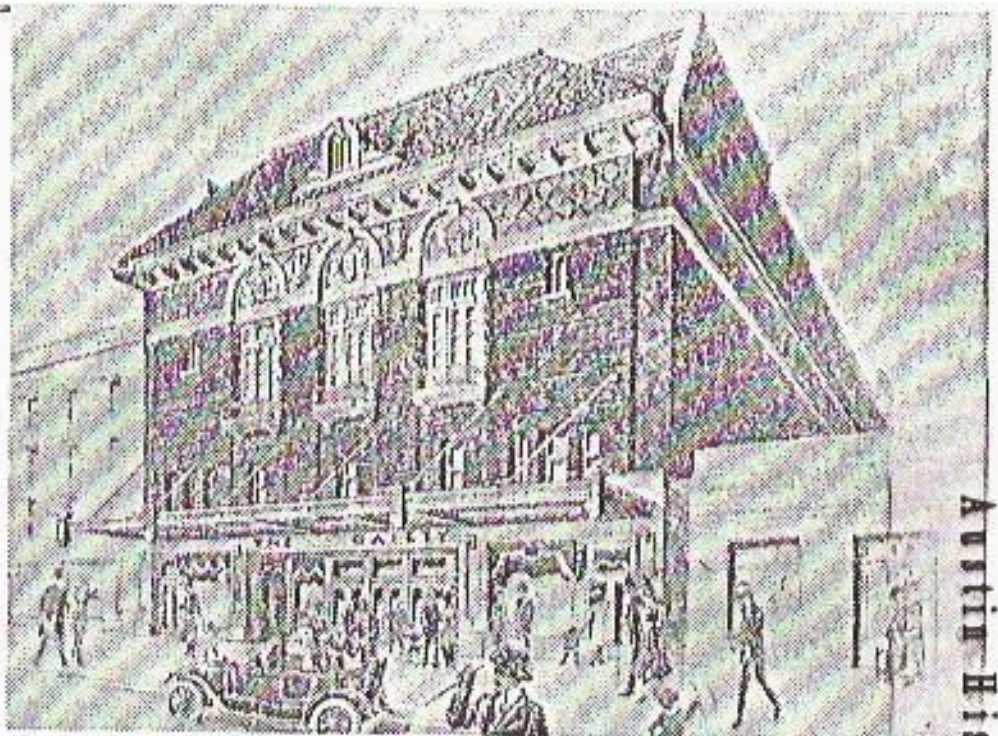
Air-conditioning, a rarity for theaters at that time, was also installed during the 1930 reconstruction.

Unobtrusive facelifts continued, and in the '50s an anamorphic lens — an innovation in the movie industry — was added along with a larger screen. During this same time, the

seating and concession stand areas were expanded, displacing a men's clothing shop.

New drapes were added to the stage area. Boarded up were the theater boxes from which Austinites once viewed the live performances of Helen Hayes, Orson Welles, Anna Pavlova, the Ziegfeld Follies, the Metropolitan Opera, Lillian Russell, John Philip Sousa, the great Barrymores, Lillian Gish, Robert Woolsey, Carrie Nation, Buster Brown, Basil Rathbone, Katharine Cornell and many other theater entertainers of that era.

All of these changes were the work of the



The old Gaiety as it originally was conceived

Emporium or Arts Center?

Interstate Vaudeville Circuit, owned by Karl Hohlitzelle. Later, the Circuit became the ABC Interstate Theaters, Inc., who currently holds the lease on the building, owned by the Malcom Reed Estate.

The theater's prospective availability has aroused the attention of the Austin Arts Council, the We Care Austin group and, to a small extent, the City.

However, none of these parties presently are in a position to foot the rental cost of the building, let alone to repair it.

The two major contenders for the building right now are Sam Chernoff, president of Theaters Corporation of Dallas, and Austinite John Bernarders, president of the year-old Paramount, Inc.

Chernoff, who has acquired the leases of downtown theaters in other Texas cities, also plans to negotiate a contract for the rental of the Paramount and its sister Interstate theater near its downtown, the City-

promised. "We'll clean them up as we go."

Chernoff said he would know the exact date of the transfer when he consulted the attorney negotiating the leases with the landlord and the sale of Interstate's movie equipment installed in both theaters.

Although, ostensibly the deal involves the Interstate chain only in the selling of film and concession facilities, Interstate officials would not commit themselves to a statement supporting Chernoff's claim to the theaters.

Pat Hudgins, Austin-based district manager of Interstate, said he had "heard something like that" but preferred that the official word come from the Dallas office.

W.R. Curtis, vice-president of ABC Interstate in Dallas, said no decision that he knew of had been made.

"The lease is not up until Oct. 14, 1975," he said, "and then we have a 5-year option. We're going to live up to the lease unless



The old Gaiety as it originally was conceived

Emporium or Arts Center?

Austin History Center

Above the street-level poster panels and its brightly lit marquee, three carved stone faces, bearded and laughing, stare out from the arcs positioned over three multi-paned windows.

A smockinoseque effect tops the horizontal lines on the main portion of the building's front.

In contrast to both of these designs is a layered tile roof rippling downward to meet a stone ledge supported by 20 beams across the face of the structure.

The huge canopy, attached by steel rods to the facade, shelters strollers on the sidewalk below and has through the years announced the changing names of the theater from Gaiety to Majestic to Paramount.

Designed by architect George A. Andreas and built by Ernest Nalle of Austin and contractor J.F. Johnson of Denton, the Paramount originally was constructed to house the various vaudeville and minstrel shows which poured into the city throughout the early 20th century.

Unobtrusive facilities continued, and in the '50s an anamorphic lens — an innovation in the movie industry — was added along with a larger screen. During this same time, the

seating and concession stand areas were expanded, displacing a men's clothing shop.

New drapes were added to the stage area. Boarded up were the theater boxes from which Austinites once viewed the live performances of Helen Hayes, Orson Welles, Anna Pavlova, the Ziegfeld Follies, the Metropolitan Opera, Lillian Russell, John Philip Sousa, the great Barrymores, Lillian Gish, Robert Woolsey, Carrie Nation, Buster Brown, Basil Rathbone, Katharine Cornell and many other theater entertainers of that era.

All of these changes were the work of the

Interstate Vaudeville Circuit, owned by Karl Hohlitzelle. Later, the Circuit became the ABC Interstate Theaters, Inc., who currently holds the lease on the building, owned by the Malcom Reed Estate.

The theater's prospective availability has aroused the attention of the Austin Arts Council, the We Care Austin group and, to a small extent, the City.

However, none of these parties presently are in a position to foot the rental cost of the building, let alone to repair it.

The two major contenders for the building right now are Sam Chernoff, president of Theaters Corporation of Dallas, and Austinite John Bernardoni, president of the year-old Paramount, Inc.

Chernoff, who has acquired the leases of downtown theaters in other Texas cities, also plans to negotiate a contract for the rental of the Paramount and its sister Interstate theater near it downtown, the State.

A compulsive worker, the Dallas businessman had to drop his project for a few weeks while he took a needed rest. Back in the office and working around the clock last week in his usual fashion, Chernoff was busily catching up on a backlog of paper work, including the State and Paramount contracts.

"We're pretty close (to getting them)," he said Tuesday in a phone interview. "We'll probably be taking them over by the first of the year."

After determining the market for what type of film profits in these theaters, Chernoff said that the corporation would "first come in and clean up the theaters a bit."

He said that the theaters would "be playing some first-run movies," depending on the results of the market study.

"The theaters won't be dark," he

promised. "We'll clean them up as we go."

Chernoff said he would know the exact date of the transfer when he consulted the attorney negotiating the leases with the landlord and the sale of Interstate's movie equipment installed in both theaters.

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W.R. Curtis, vice-president of ABC Interstate in Dallas, said no decision that he knew of had been made.

"The lease is not up until Oct. 14, 1975," he said, "and then we have a 5-year option. We're going to live up to the lease unless some other arrangements have been made."

"I have not notified the landlord in writing (that Interstate is moving out," Curtis said, but added in reference to the negotiations, "we have maybe a general agreement."

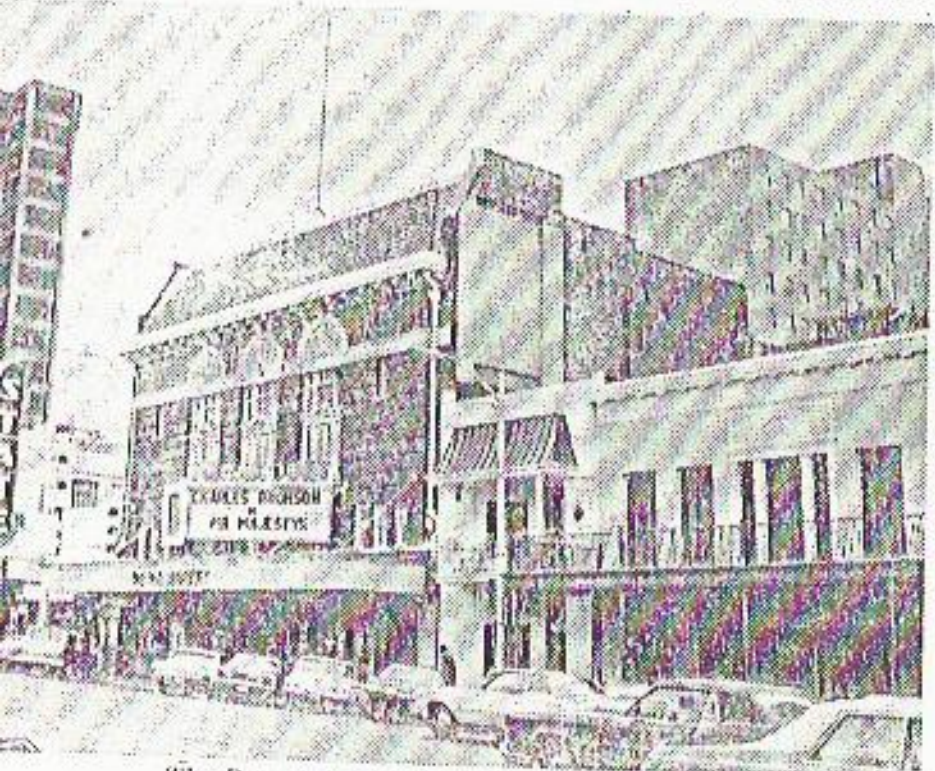
The other businessman interested in what happens to the lease to the Paramount is John Bernardoni, a young Austinite who, with Stephen Scott and William R. Schriber, founded Paramount, Inc., on Dec. 13, 1973.

The purpose of the organization is to establish the Paramount Theater as a performing arts center for Austin. These ambitious plans also call for the complete restoration of the theater.

Bernardoni has already set the standards for the quality he wants in the entertainment to be booked at the Paramount.

"There will be no rock and roll in the theater whatsoever. The closest we will get

(Continues on Page 36)



The Paramount today with its future in doubt



John
Bustin

Austinites interested either in heritage or cultural entertainment will cheer the carefully worked-out plan to convert the downtown Paramount Theatre into a plush music and theatre center echoing its illustrious history.

Spearheaded by John Bernardoni, a young actor-entrepreneur with a practical sort of vision, a corporation has been formed to obtain the building when its present lease expires next year and to refurbish it as a showplace for major touring attractions and selected local groups' activities.

The Paramount, as some people may have forgotten, was built as a "legitimate" theatre (i.e., dramatic productions, as opposed to movies or vaudeville offerings) and has perfect acoustics, not to mention that "mellow" sound quality that fine old theatres and concert halls traditionally have.

During its storied past, the old Paramount played host to some fabled names — Katherine Cornell, Katharine Hepburn, Orson Welles, the Barrymores, George M. Cohan, bandmaster John Philip Sousa, Mae West, even early-day temperance leader Carrie Nations. Not to mention the late Skinny Pryor, an esteemed local showman in his own right.

Now, Bernardoni and his associates want to return this sort of elegance and glamor to the Paramount, bringing in such attractions as, say, the Harkness Ballet or a top Broadway production and also making it available as a home for the Austin Symphony Orchestra and the Austin Civic Ballet.

There is, of course, a tremendous need for a theatre with a seating capacity of around 1,500 to house shows that are simply too intimate or too limited in drawing power to fill a 4,000-seat auditorium, and the Paramount would serve admirably to fill this vacancy in our performing arts facilities.

In addition, it would keep in use one of the best examples of early 1900s theatre architecture, and in these days of heritage consciousness, Bernardoni's plan merits twice the attention for being a worthwhile restoration project.

Either way you look at it, though, it's a plan that we might all hope comes to fruition.

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Speaking of big plans, talented local actress and all-around fascinating personality Karen Kuykendall and two of her brothers — Guich and Tim Kooek — are putting together a sort of junior world's fair for Fredericksburg in June.

They're lining up 150 Texas artists and 150 top foreign artists, along with assorted classical and pop-folk music ensembles and a variety of other unique attractions.

Just the formative plans make it sound like quite a show.

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A few fast odds and ends:

The "Leadbelly" film company finished up shooting in the Austin area last week after two busy but productive months here. According to unit publicist Neil Koenigburg, a New Yorker who's

Oakland Adapts Movie House as Arts Hall

Oakland, Calif., has a new center for the performing arts. But there's more to it than just that—it is a converted movie theater, actually one of the grand palaces of the Art Deco era, and it cost only \$2 million to reopen, as compared to an

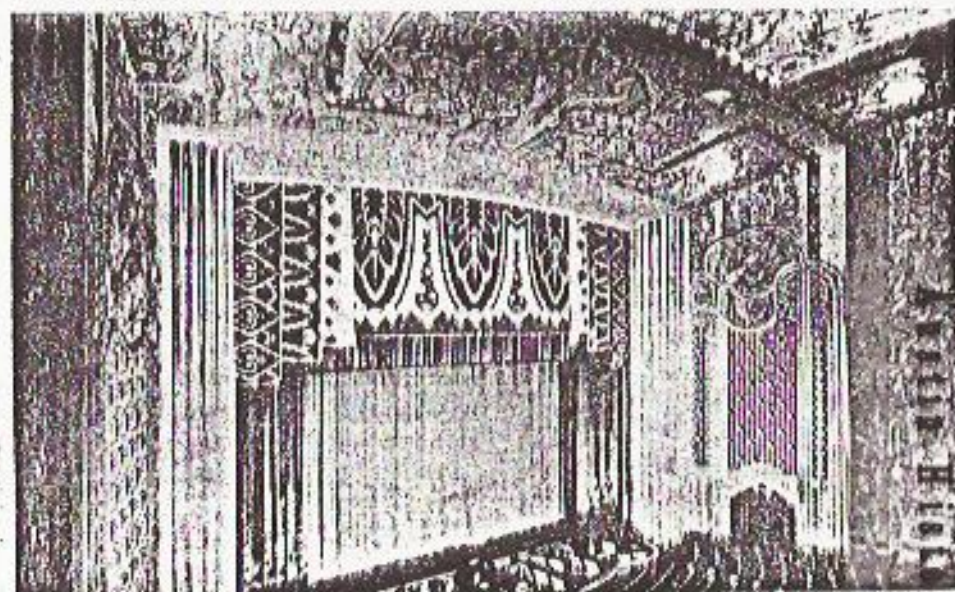
estimated \$13 million for a new hall.

The Paramount Theatre of the Arts reopened on September 22 ending three years of non-use. The 42-year-old structure now joins such other converted theaters as Powell Symphony Hall in St. Louis and Heinz Hall for the Performing Arts in Pittsburgh. It once again shows that old buildings can have new lives and that adapting an old structure can cost less than building a new one.

The idea for reusing the old Paramount blossomed in 1970 after an engineering study commissioned by civic leaders showed that a new performing arts hall would cost at least \$13 million and take four years to build. In September 1970, the Paramount closed and the engineering firm was asked to look at the theater as a possibility. The study report, released in April 1971, said that the 3,000-seat theater was ideal—structurally sound, acoustically excellent, plenty of parking and convenient to transportation.

Negotiations with the owners, National General Corporation, took more than a year. In July 1972, the building was sold to the Oakland Symphony Orchestra Association for \$1 million; National General made a \$500,000 contribution to the fund drive. The orchestra association then established the Paramount Theatre of the Arts as a separate division to operate the facility. The orchestra pays rent to the Paramount, as will the other performers and groups using the theater.

The \$1 million-restoration duplicates the original designs of the structure. The



Gabriel Boullin Sketch

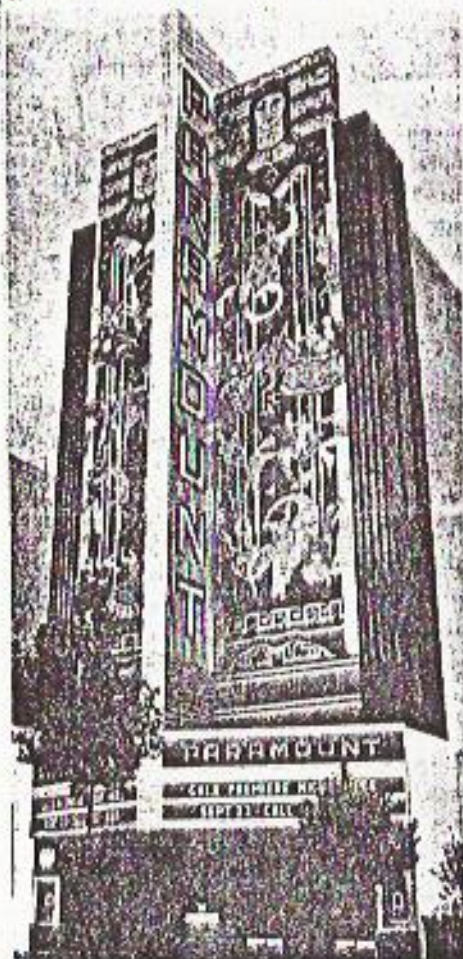
The auditorium of the Paramount Theatre of the Arts seats 3,000. It was completed in 1931. work included matching the carpeting (the lobby alone has 3,000 square feet), upholstery and 66-foot wide main-stage curtain. These were all recreated from the originals. New seating was installed, the lighting was repaired and the original decorations were silver or gold leafed.

The gala opening night served as a benefit for the fund drive to restore the building (a loan from the Bank of America enabled the group to undertake the work) and to establish a \$2 million endowment. Among the performers were Milton Berle, the Doodletown Pipers, Henry Fonda, Donald O'Connor and John Scott Trotter's orchestra. The Oakland Symphony opened its concert season in the hall on October 2 and will perform each week. Other nights

will see such talent as the San Francisco Ballet, Ferrante and Teicher, the Siberian Dance Company and The King Family. It is hoped that movies could also be shown.

The Paramount was designed by Timothy L. Pfeuger, a prominent Bay Area architect, who also did the Pacific Stock Exchange Building, "400 Sutter" and the I. Magnia Company building in San Francisco. The theater is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is considered to be the best example of Art Deco remaining after the Radio City Music Hall.

"It would cost \$30 million to build a structure like this today," says one theater official, "and then you couldn't do it. The craftsmen are just not available."



Gaihe Cantorbe

The 87-foot-high Art Deco mosaic facade of the recently reopened Paramount Theatre of the Arts in Oakland, Calif.

Harry Weese, a Landmark Man

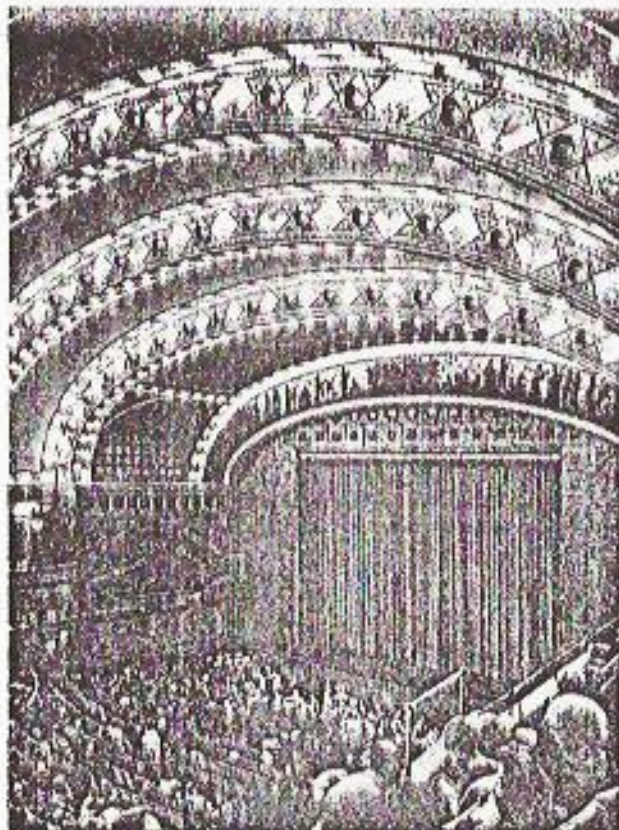
The following article is reprinted from *Time*, *The Weekly Newsmagazine*, by permission.

Given the chance to tear down some musty old theater and to design a glass-walled new "culture center," most architects would rejoice and turn to their drawing boards. Not Chicago's Harry Weese. Though he is one of the nation's most talented architects, he goes out of his way to preserve landmark buildings. "We do it because it has to be done," he explains. "Fine old buildings give our cities character and continuity. They give us a sense of stability."

Weese, 58, is a natural landmark man. He loves cities, he bicycles to work, not so much to get the exercise as to feel Chicago's texture. Characteristically, he installed his office in an old warehouse with greenery-filled atrium and a glass-roofed elevator—"so you can look at the clouds." His own designs, from Washington's Arena Stage theater to the U.S. embassy in Ghana, are similarly lyric, and they always respect their architectural context. In his Walton Apartments in Chicago, for example, he used bay windows to echo those used by the city's great turn-of-the-century architects: Daniel Burnham, John Root, Louis Sullivan and Dankmar Adler. Says Weese: "I would rather match a cornice line, or set one that could be matched, than try to build a spectacular building that stands by itself."

Auditorium Theater

This concern for urban fabric led Weese to his first renovation job—Chicago's Auditorium Theater. Designed by Adler and Sullivan in the 1880's, it had become a U.S.O. club with bowling alleys and finally ended as a neglected shell. Its roof leaked; its 4,000 velvet-covered seats were rotting. Weese meticulously restored the stately interior with its soaring arches, curving balconies and richly ornamental plaster friezes. The work cost \$2,000,000 and was finished in 1967. The result: a glowing golden concert and opera hall with near perfect acoustics.



Richard Nickel
Opening night audience on October 31, 1967, at the restored Auditorium Theater in Chicago. Designed by Adler and Sullivan, it was restored by Harry Weese.

Some of Weese's restoration jobs—notably Chicago's huge, Greco-Roman Field Museum of Natural History, its Newberry Library and Orchestra Hall—involve what he calls "good housekeeping." He makes no major structural changes, but he reorganizes layouts and adds air conditioning and modern lighting. The point: to keep old buildings useful, and so to give them new life.

Sometimes that is a difficult task. Weese went to Louisville to save a small bank (*PN*, April 1973) that he describes as "one of the nation's most sophisticated

examples of Greek Revival style." By building a new auditorium and stage between the bank and an old warehouse on a rear lot, he turned the complex into a theater. Residents of Montgomery, Ala., called Weese to save the classical pre-Civil War state capitol from legislators who want a new building. He has proposed new lighting and air conditioning and a refurbishing of the gracious old details, down to the yellow-pine floors and marble fireplaces.

"It requires some daring to keep a building's integrity and still plan for maximum feasible use," Weese says. "You have to concentrate on what *not* to do: you touch one thing, like the plumbing, you can sometimes start a chain reaction." As much as possible, he follows the original plans. That takes selflessness, a willingness to let a long-dead architect dictate nearly every step. But, Weese wryly notes, "Modern architects have a hard time matching the quality of work the old master."

Preservation Economics

Weese is convinced that renovation almost always costs less than leveling old buildings and constructing anew. Boston's old Jewett Theater, an intimate Georgian structure, would have cost at least \$5,000,000 to replace. Boston University is spending \$400,000 to fix it up. Even less striking buildings are worth refurbishing. Weese is currently starting a project, funded by the Federal Housing Administration, to rehabilitate an elegant, old three-story walk-up apartment house in a Chicago slum. "You can't duplicate it today," he says. "Saving this kind of building saves a bit of the urban environment."

There is a definite place for new buildings in his philosophy too. "Coexistence is the key," Weese says. "The old with the new." Then he adds a more personal reason for his efforts at preservation: "It might sound a bit chauvinistic—but maybe someone will save one of our buildings some day."