

The Varsity Theatre

The North Shore's New Super Movie House

OPENED THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1926

VARSIITY REPRESENTS UTMOST IN MODERNITY

New Theater Opening Thursday
Sets Unique Standard in
Magnificence

The latest milestone in north shore progress was achieved Thursday with the formal opening of the new Varsity theater, Sherman avenue and Church street, Evanston.

Planned primarily to promote Evanston's position as hub of the north shore amusement world, the Varsity displays an individual type of beauty in playhouses with its unique treatment, design, decorations, furnishings and equipment.

Represents Chateau Courtyard

The auditorium proper is planned to represent the courtyard of a French chateau of magnificent coloring and rare charm. On each side arise representations of the outer walls of a beautiful castle against a clear blue sky. Its massive stonework is relieved here and there by embrasures over which hang richly colored awnings held by ebony spears. Its turrets and buttresses, gaily emblazoned windows and irregular sky line have relief in the brilliant roof of red tile extending out into the auditorium, and in its delicate balconies behind.

The courtyard scheme of treatment is extended to the stage, the proscenium arch effecting a continuation of the chateau and forming a massive arched gateway with flying flags and pennons. Another gay awning, supported by ebony spears, falls gracefully over the top of the motion picture screen, and at both sides are mullioned windows through which soft rose-colored lights faintly glimmer. At intervals along the outer chateau walls, are placed richly-wrought lanterns, intricate of design, which shed a soft glow over the dull ivory and gold walls.

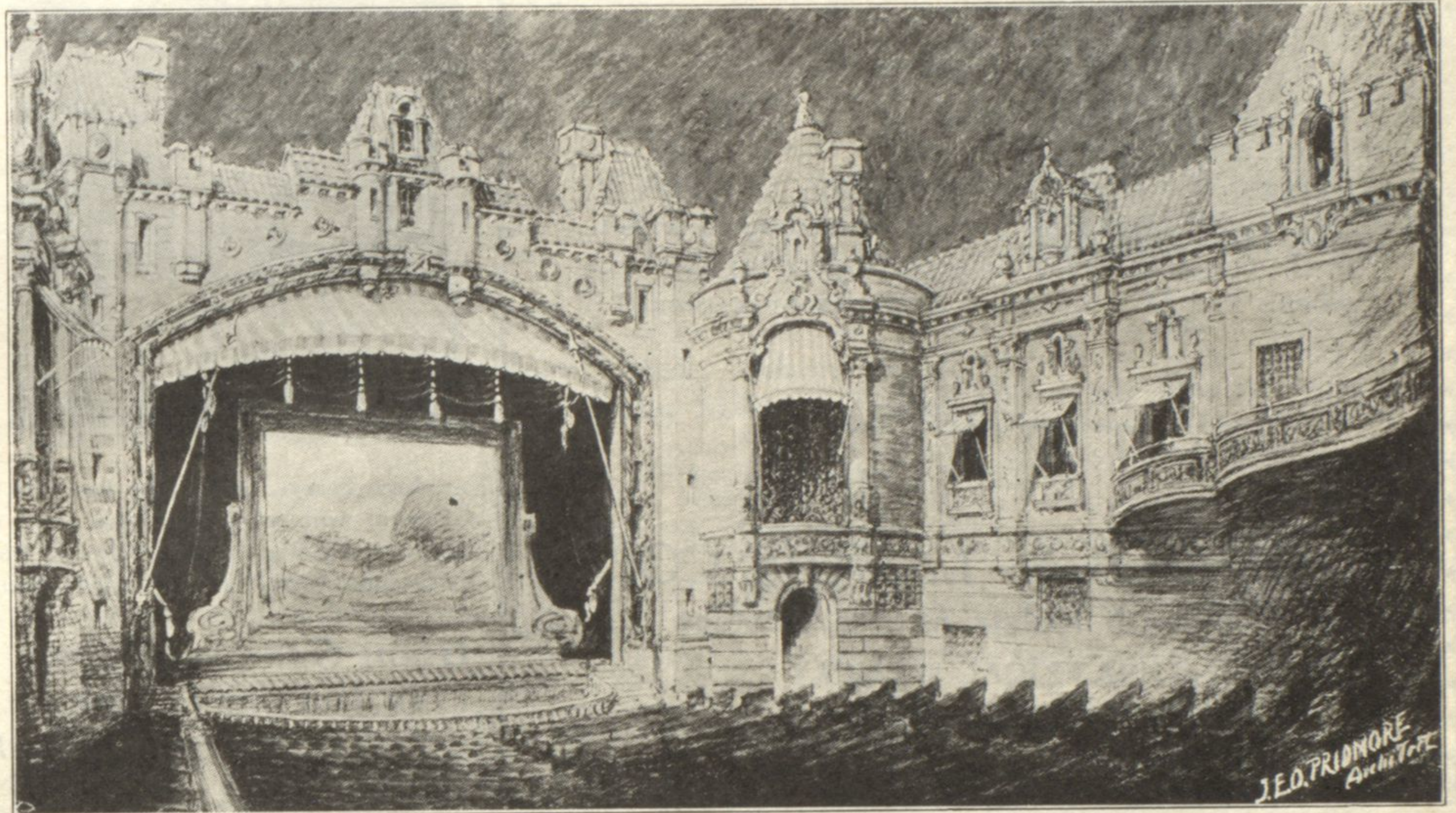
Like Sitting Outdoors

The illusion of sitting out-of-doors in the chateau courtyard is enhanced by the marvelous lighting effects and the ceiling treatment of the theater. Overhead is a cerulean blue sky with twinkling stars, floating fleecy clouds and a delicate crescent moon which sails slowly overhead during the performance, its rising and setting being so timed that it slowly fades from view behind the chateau just at the close of the performance, a distinctive innovation in theater decoration.

There is innovation, too, in the treatment of "the atmospheric console" of the great Geneva organ, which is sunken and rises to view during organ numbers. On the console a miniature French chateau, turrets, windows and all, rises from a rugged stone base.

The entire decorative scheme has the predominant tones of dull ivory and gold relieved by splashes of soft blues, reds and delicate greens. The spacious lobby, entered from Sherman avenue, leads into a richly-carpeted twenty-foot foyer extending across the theater's width. Rare articles of vertu, richly colored vases and beautiful paintings adorn the foyer walls, and deeply-cushioned divans and chairs, rare rugs of heavy pile and a massive crystal chandelier poised in the center

Chateau Courtyard Is Varsity Auditorium



The unique illusion that the visitor to the new Varsity theater is seated within the courtyard of a French chateau with its colorful surroundings, is created in the decoration and outfitting of the playhouse which is officially opened this evening. The Varsity represents the north shore's first elaborate venture in movie playhouses.

Lighting Scheme of Varsity Expresses Early French Era

Exquisite and distinctive lighting features, designed especially to harmonize with the interior decorations, are a pleasing part of the Varsity theater's equipment.

The illumination in the auditorium proper is treated in suggestion of an early French period, a crude lantern type of fixture enameled in bright colors being used. On the mezzanine floor a combination of Venetian colored crystal and metal, finished in French gold with applied Dresden flowers, forms harmonious contrast to the wall adornments. In the lobby a modern Italian design was used, the metal work finished in old iron and antique gold.

The designers and makers of the lighting fixtures supplied them for the new Palmer house in Chicago and have prepared designs for the big new Stevens hotel there.

of a well in the ceiling complete an ensemble that for beauty and elegance compare favorably with any of the large Chicago theaters.

A spacious lounge, reached from the foyer by a marble stairway, is a feature of the mezzanine floor, and adjoining this are roomy and comfortable rest rooms and boudoir conveniences for women patrons.

Heating and ventilating systems, projection booth and other mechanical details have been as carefully worked out as those of beauty and convenience, making it a distinctly different theater for Evanston and the north shore towns.

Noted Scenic Artists Create Varsity Setting

In keeping with the character of work demanded by the builders of the Varsity theater, much stress was laid upon proper stage settings and scenic work. With this in mind, contract for this work was awarded to the Sosman & Landis Co. This company has been in existence since 1878 and many of its artists and mechanics have practically spent their lives in developing their art. Among the notables connected with this organization are Thomas G. Moses, president, and Fred R. Megan, secretary and treasurer.

Mr. Moses' first work in theatrical scenic painting began at the old McVicker theater building. Among his early works were the painting of the scenic effects for the first Pinafore company that went west of Chicago. Following this Madame Mojeska secured Mr. Moses' services in painting the complete productions of Marie Antoinette, Macbeth and Marie Stuart. Not long after this Madame Bernhardt commissioned Mr. Moses to paint the scenic effects for her production of Judas.

The more modern professionals, Walker Whiteside, William Brady, Grace George and others also engaged him for the painting of their productions.

Mr. Moses is also a landscape painter of well earned repute. His landscape paintings are well known from Maine to California and are nearly all recognized as masterpieces. His work has been exhibited at the Art institute of Chicago, the Art institute of Grand Rapids and each year at the Salamagundi club in New York.

Fred R. Megan, secretary and treas-

Leo Terry, Capitol Theater Organist, Comes to Varsity

Leo Terry, former organist at the Capitol theater, Chicago, one of the foremost theater organists in the country, presided over the console of the giant Geneva organ which is so valuable a part of the new Varsity theater equipment.

Mr. Terry has won recognition as a veritable master of the largest types of so-called "unit" organs. He comes to Evanston from the Capitol, one of the most pretentious south side theaters in Chicago, where he has been playing since its opening several years ago and where he has enjoyed an abiding and wide popularity among its patrons.

He is both a concert organist of rare ability and a composer, originating his own organ solo novelties and specialties. He is possessor of a fine lyric tenor voice and varies his unique specialties by singing some of the numbers. He is also a humorist, reputed for his genuine Irish wit and sense of humor, and for his pleasing personality.

In "cuing" big pictures of the sort that will be shown at the Varsity, Mr. Terry in a master, his interpretations twinkling with bright tricks and antics, and in more serious moods he plays with equally deep feeling.

urer of the Sosman & Landis Co., spent 30 years as director of art with the Kansas City Scenic Co. He severed this connection at the outbreak of the war and had charge of the building and equipment of the Liberty theaters in all cantonments, in this country.