

ENCORE

AT THE

FARGO THEATRE



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Research, Text, Design
and Production

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Dedicated to
Eddie and Hildegard Kraus

Eddie and Hildegard Kraus (center)
enjoying their Hollywood visit with Jimmy
Stewart and Claudette Colbert.

Introduction

The Orpheum Theatre is gone. So is the Moorhead, the Grand, the State, the Princess, the Garrick. The only surviving theatre of the days of vaudeville and touring theatrical groups in the Fargo-Moorhead area is the greatest of them all, the Fargo Theatre at 314 North Broadway.

The Fargo Theatre was built in 1926. The twenties were a time of extremes. There were many wealthy people, but also many very poor ones. Culture competed with vulgarity for people's attention. There was great ambition, but there were also many who said "what-the-heck." One common activity, though, for which nearly everyone held religious fervor, was "to go places and do things." And what did they do most of all? They went to the movies.

The motion picture palaces, and the Fargo Theatre was one of the best in the Finkelstein and Ruben chain, were, in their time and their prime, the peculiar satisfiers to a massive public taste. "Just as the run of the pictures that were the basic elements of their programs . . . provided the sensation-hungry with illusions and fantasies, the great movie theatres did the same thing with their size and munificence. They were the tangible illusions in which the more shadowy illusions were contained."

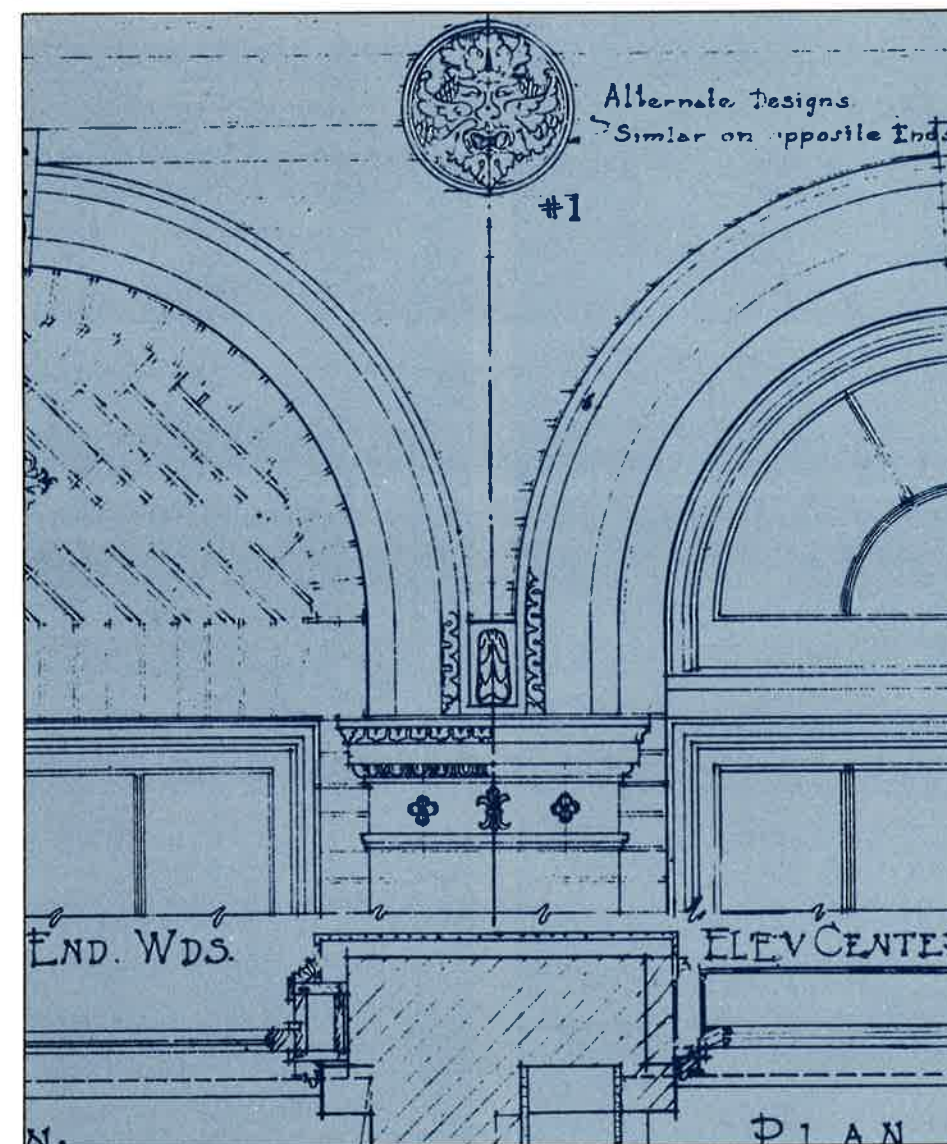
And now there is one . . . the Fargo Theatre. And I'm going to tell you about it. I'll tell you about the grand opening, the early vaudeville and silent film days, the bold remodeling of the interior by architect Jack Liebenberg, and the love affair Fargo had with Manager Eddie Kraus and his wife, Hildegard — whom we know today as the "Incomparable Hildegard." I'll tell you about the Mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ, part one-man band, part symphony orchestra, part sound effects department. I'll tell you about a small, but growing, group of dedicated people who are committed to keeping the Fargo Theatre in operation and to restoring it to its rightful grandeur, not as a monument to the past, but as an educational and entertainment center of the future.

This booklet is not meant to be a ponderous, comprehensive history. It is most certainly based on research and interviews. But, just as with movie-making, there's been some editing. I want to tell you a story.

Daniel Cornejo
Fargo, 1985



The 1926 Christmas Party for local staff of the Minnesota Amusement Company theatres in the Fargo-Moorhead area, held at the Fargo Theatre.



Facade detail from the original 1926 drawings by Buechner and Orth, architects.

March 15, 1926 — A Gala Day For Fargo

Fargoans who waited their turn at the portals of the new Fargo Theatre on Monday afternoon and evening, March 15, 1926, to view the opening program, were richly rewarded for their patience.

Finkelstein and Ruben's new amusement playhouse fulfilled their promise that the new theatre would be a splendid addition to the Gate City, as Fargo was called back then. The costly iridescent curtain and gorgeous stage lights, bewitching architectural beauty, symphonic music and luxurious appointments supported the statement that "nothing has been spared to make the building an attractive and comfortable amusement palace."

The excellent tones of the costly \$25,000 Wurlitzer pipe organ were played superbly by Ramon Berry and attested to the fine acoustics of the building. Mr. Berry came to the Fargo direct from Chicago, where he had been featured in deluxe picture houses for several years. Mr. Berry was considered one of the foremost improvisors of motion picture music in the country. Organ development has been given close attention for years by Finkelstein and Ruben. Concentrated efforts were made by these showmen at all times to select capable and creative organists for the consoles of their organs.

From noon Monday until after the final 9:15 p.m. performance, throngs waited in line for admittance to the show. Several of the Finkelstein and Ruben officials came to Fargo to assist Manager Ted Force in handling the crowds and to meet Fargo residents during the inspection period that preceded the opening.

A varied program of pictures and vaudeville interspersed with organ and orchestra numbers made the entertainment bill well worth the price of admission; adults paid 25¢ for the matinee and 50¢ for the evening performances, and children were charged 10¢ for either showing.

The King Cole Revue, a pretentious musical extravaganza numbering 15 entertainers, was the feature of the program. The Revue was heralded as the most ambitious musical extravaganza ever attempted by the Finkelstein and Ruben studios. Raymond Whiting, described as a "lithesome colored soft shoe dancer," was the outstanding performer in this act with his sensational

pedal patter. A commentary in the *Fargo Forum* the following day said, "Whiting all but tied a knot in his legs during his two brief but animated appearances on the stage." Hap Doyle as King Cole of modern version introduced his court while Jimmy Buscher and his eight "syncomaniacs" kept everyone in good humor with some of the best jazz music every heard locally. Carlos and Stone had all the regulation Charleston steps and several variations the likes of which had never been seen before.

"King Tut" Swanenberg, winner of the Finkelstein and Ruben Old Fiddlers contest, beguiled his age and whiskers by the pep and ginger he displayed in a rendition of several well-known old time dance tunes. A quartet of attractive dancing girls completed the cast of the

revue.

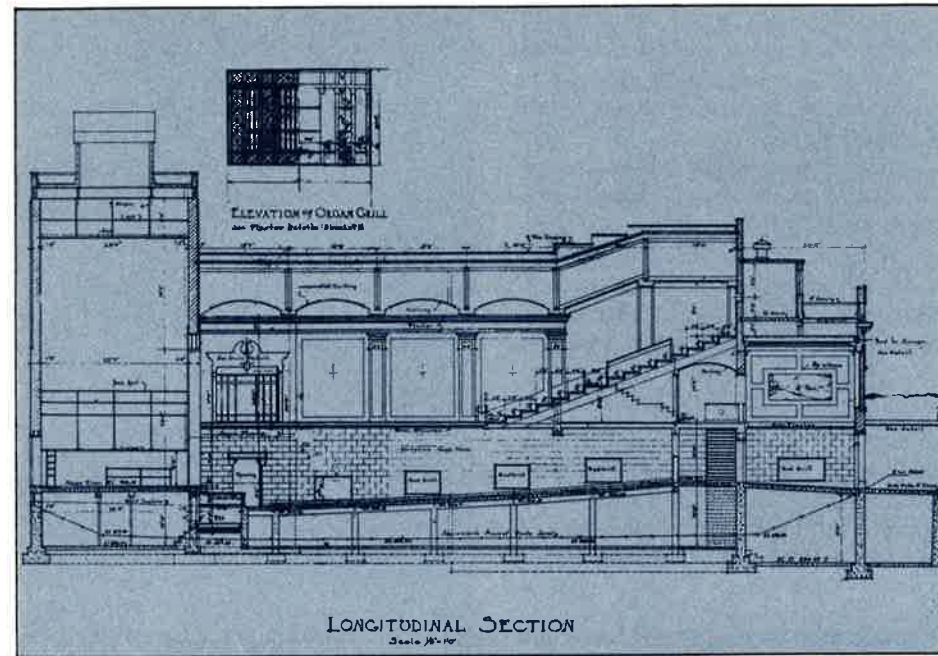
Sydney Chaplin played the stellar role in an amusing farce comedy, "The Man on the Box," feature film number on the day's program. Chaplin, who began as a pantomimist in London music halls, became one of the screen's foremost comedians. Comparisons with his more illustrious brother, Charlie, would be out of place, but Sydney was regarded as no mean comic entertainer by all screen standards. "The Man on the Box" concerned the amusing adventures of a wealthy idler who hires himself out as a taxi cab driver. Alice Calhoun, Helene Costello and David Butler were cast in prominent parts in the supporting cast.

A news reel, an animated cartoon film, and burlesque numbers rounded out a varied program that had something of interest for everyone.

(Based on *Fargo Forum* and *North Dakota American* newspaper accounts, March 13-16, 1926)



Ramon Berry



A cross-section drawing of the auditorium, from the original architect's plans.

A Baroque Amusement Playhouse

Finkelstein and Ruben, owners of the new Fargo Theatre, called it the finest and most modern playhouse in North Dakota. And indeed it was.

At a total cost of \$350,000 for land, building improvements and equipment, the Fargo Theatre took six months to be built by the T. F. Powers and Company construction firm. This was the same firm which built the Derecci Block across the street (known today as The Fargoan), and the Powers Hotel and Lowman Block in the block north of the Theatre.

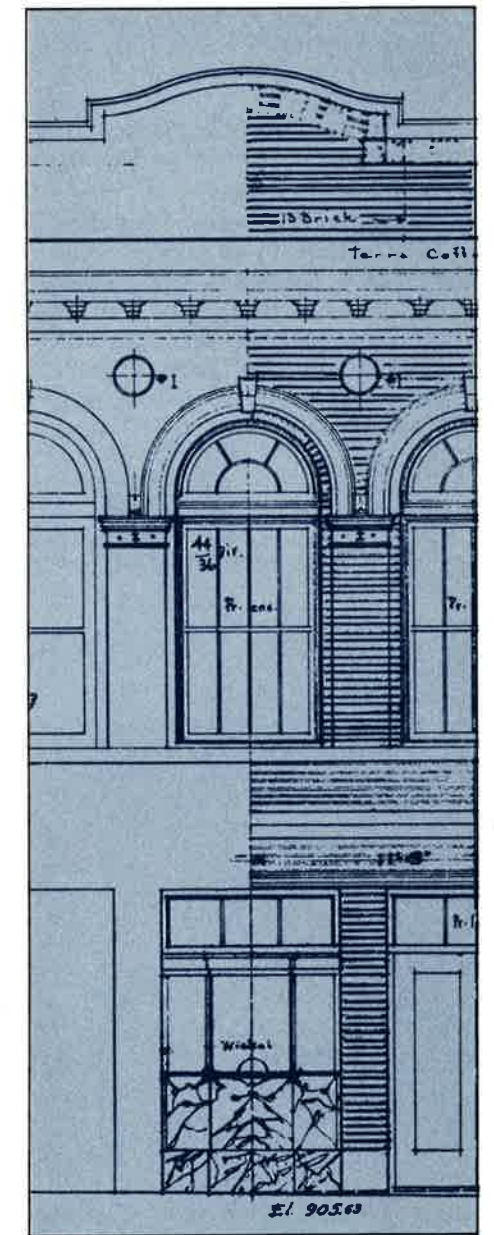
Henry Orth, of the architectural firm Buechner and Orth, designed the Theatre. This same firm designed no less than thirteen, out of fifty-three of North Dakota's courthouses. The firm was known for its aggressiveness in getting business and attention to detail. Orth was a Norwegian immigrant who came to St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1902. He was the firm's chief designer.

The front facade of this Baroque or Renaissance Revival building is clad in red brick, sits on a base of limestone, and was originally symmetrical in appearance. Entrance doors and a box office occupied the center at street level, and were flanked by a small storefront shop and a pair of exit doors on each side. Above the exits, stone consoles visually supported cornices, each of which were terminated at the top with a decorative cartouch.

Fargo Theatre was evidence of his artistic knowledge in this line of beautifying. The Theatre auditorium was designed primarily to create a restful effect. The lobby, with its originality of design, artistry in execution, and bizarre effect, was considered the equal of any decorative treatment of the lobby of any theatre in the country.

No story of the new Fargo Theatre would be complete without some allusion to one of its most important musical features — the mighty Wurlitzer organ, whose tonal qualities are different from any other organs. Its variety of stops make it an almost human piece of complicated machinery. More on the Wurlitzer organ on page 18.

(Portions of the above were taken from the National Register of Historic Places nomination form completed for the Fargo Theatre by Steven C. Johnson)



From Vaudeville to Talkies, Stage Plays and Operas

The roster of stars appearing at the Fargo Theatre in its early days would read like a *Who's Who* of vaudeville — or rather a who *was* who, since many are largely forgotten now. A few, however, stayed in the spotlight.

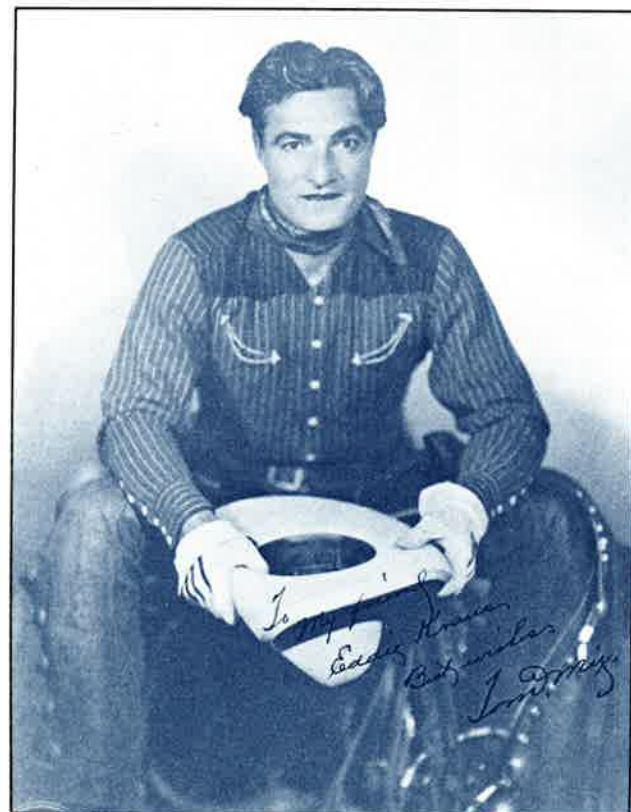
Charlie Hauser, who grew up in Fargo, remembers the construction of the Fargo Theatre — watched it all from the alleys with a friend. And he remembers vaudeville:

"My whole family was theatre goers, as far as vaudeville was concerned. I can remember you'd go to a show, and I don't think it was very long—55 minutes or something like that. But then you had the acts . . . All for only 10¢. It was 5¢ at the Isis, down by my father's meat market. But the Fargo was a really modern theatre, with a big chandelier. In the evenings I'd go to see the vaudeville "changes" — they'd change 3 times a week. I saw Babe Ruth on stage in his uniform. And he had a baseball hanging down from a wire or string. And with his big bat, he'd hit that ball and knock it all over heck. I don't remember much of what he said,

because I was so young. But he did throw them down to the audience, and I happened to grab one. I didn't have it very long — the other kids jumped all over me and I lost it."

Tom Mix, the silent screen cowboy star rumoured to have ridden with Pancho Villa, once filled the Fargo Theatre stage, not only with his awesome movie persona, but also with his almost-as-well-known horse, Tony. In fact, it was through Tony that Charlie Hauser almost got to meet Tom Mix. Charlie recalls:

"Well, behind the Fargo there was a garage, and he had Tony back there, and Tony, Jr. And I discovered them as my friend and I were walking through the alley — we were always walking through the alleys. We'd find more stuff in them. So we come down, and here was Tony, and Tony, Jr. We went in there and visited these horses. And, of course, in those days I just thought Tony was the tops. And Tom Mix was the top cowboy for me. Anyway, from there we went into the show and Tom was on



Tom Mix without his co-star, Tony (his horse). His silent films during the 1920's virtually kept the William Fox Studios in business.

stage. I don't know how he did this, but he had a shooting deal, where he'd show how he could shoot. He made a lot of noise, oh and the smoke! And he was breaking little balls and stuff — he must've been shooting something, bullets made out of material that would disintegrate. But even so, I don't know how he did it."

Vaudeville was the main attraction at the Fargo Theatre until December 4, 1927, when Vitaphone (or talking picture) equipment was installed. Giovanni Martinelli of the Metropolitan Opera Company sang a solo from Pagliacci. Will Hays, president of Motion Picture Producers, Inc., gave an address of welcome. George Jessel starred in a comedy monologue and song. And the New York Philharmonic orchestra played Tannhauser. However, the feature picture that night was a silent, *The College Widow*, starring Dolores Costello.

Al Jolson's *The Jazz Singer* was the first all-singing and all-talking feature picture screened at the Fargo, presented on February 20, 1928. Vitaphone short subjects were highlights on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays for the next few months after that, with Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays devoted to a program of five vaudeville acts with a silent picture feature. Not until July 2, 1928, when Dolores Costello and Conrad Nagel were starred in *Tenderloin*, did talking pictures become a regular feature.

The Depression years were a struggling time for the Fargo Theatre, as they were for all businesses, and individuals most of all. The entertainment industry was hit very hard. Many theatres throughout the country were closed down. Vaudeville was declared dead in 1931. The coast to coast vaudeville circuit, a branch of the Keith-Orpheum circuit, which had been showing in Fargo, was largely dependent on California, where it had been booked for runs of several consecutive weeks. But the vaudeville shows were being eliminated in the west in favor of talking pictures, causing long jumps with frequent periods of unemployment for the stage actors. The Fargo Theatre management did what many other theatres did to survive. The stage shows were scrapped. Prices were reduced. Only movies were shown, sometimes double features, which was unheard of up to that time. The management also decided to completely remodel the Theatre to make it modern — but I'm getting ahead of myself; more on this later.



Silent Screen star Eloda Beach.

The 1940's saw the emergence of live drama, stage shows and opera — on the stages of movie houses. These productions were not vaudeville, nor were they considered adjuncts to movies. They were full-length theatrical events.

Even though bitterly cold weather on January 23, 1940, kept many away from the Fargo Theatre, those who were present witnessed one of the most hilarious and ingratiating stage productions ever performed there, in the farce, *Thanks For My Wife*.

Four screen stars — Glenda Farrell, Alan Dinehart, Lyle Talbot and Sheila Bromley — headed the cast of the clever, laugh-provoking, rather risqué play. It was the first time in Fargo's history that any of its stages had four film folk present in person at one time — and the audience made much of it. Alan Dinehart captured the spirit of the times in America when he remarked to Roy P. Johnson, *Fargo Forum* reporter, "I feel that what the public wants these days is lusty comedy, something to make them forget about war and rumors of war."

Perhaps a production which stirred emotions stronger, and more somberly, was the January, 1941, performance of Robert E. Sherwood's play, *There Shall Be No Night*, which starred Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne. The play told of the poignant effect of modern war, particularly the type of war waged by the ideology of Russia and Germany, upon a family living in a democracy (Finland). The play was sold out. Manager Ed Kraus called John Pollack, their advance man, in Victoria, B.C., the week before they were to arrive in an attempt to have them

come earlier to put on a matinee. Because of bad weather, they arrived on the North Coast Limited at 2:45 p.m. the day of the performance, too late to stage two shows. Over 1,100 people saw the evening performance, some coming from as far away as Jamestown and Bismarck.

Two years later North Dakota weather again played a prominent role in a Fargo Theatre production. *The Student Prince*, Sigmund Romberg's well-known operetta, was scheduled to be presented at the Fargo on January 26, 1943, by a cast of Shubert players returning to New York after appearances on the west coast.

The show was cancelled because the eastbound mid-afternoon train on which the company was to arrive from the west was seven hours late. \$1,800 had to be refunded to the nearly sold-out crowd who had mailed in their ticket orders. Manager Ed Kraus must have had a long face indeed as he walked in 20 degrees below zero weather to greet the troupe at 12:15 a.m. as their train slowly pulled in.

A few months later, the question on Fargoans' lips was, "How many miles of curtain rope does the troupe carry to enable Karloff to tie up Sundberg for each performance? Yes, Boris Karloff, the arch villain, was at the Fargo Theatre in March of 1943 to make murder a funny business in *Arsenic and Old Lace*. All but three seats were filled as Fargoans rolled with laughter at the many clever lines of Joseph Kesselring's play.

Pirates of Penzance by Gilbert and Sullivan, and *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Bronte's famous play, were also performed at the Fargo Theatre to sell-out crowds in 1943.

Ballet came to the Fargo in 1945 with the performance of a modernized version

of *The Merry Widow*. The *Fargo Forum* of February 4, 1945, notes that Manager Ed Kraus, in his press announcement of the booking, hastened to add that the company would arrive in Fargo the day before, a full 24 hours ahead of curtain time. Nancy Kenyon sang the title role, with Robert Zeller conducting the orchestra. The ballet was performed by the Boston opera company.

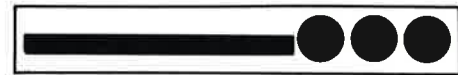
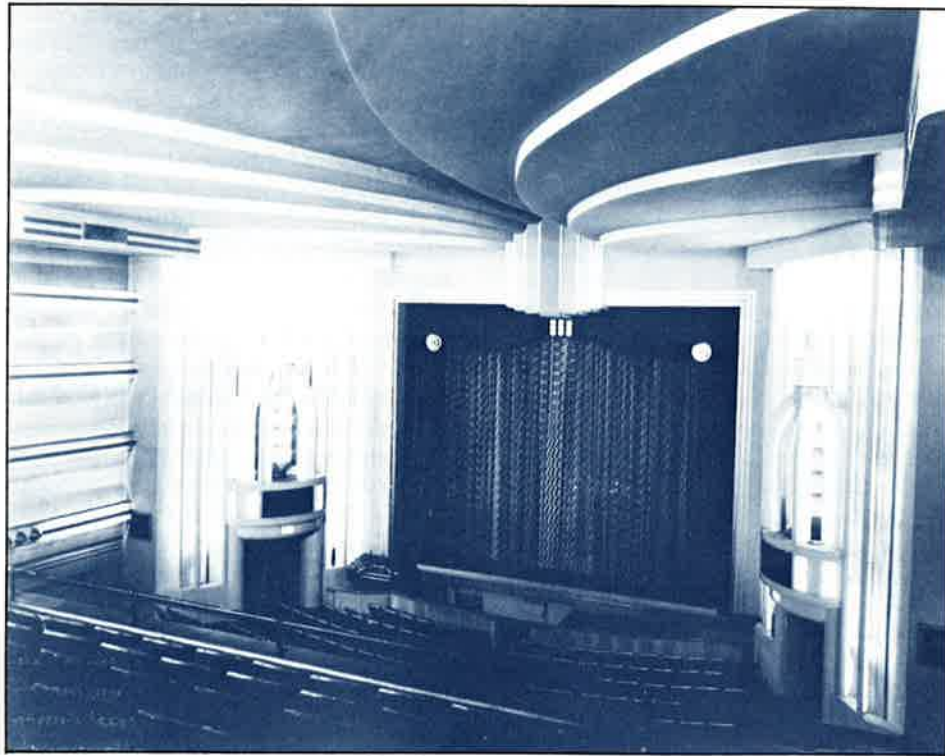
A few months later Ed Kraus, obviously flushed with the success of *The Merry Widow*, booked Verdi's grand opera, *La Traviata*, which was also sold out before the curtain went up.

"Gripping but sensitive" was how local critics characterized the performance of Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* at the Fargo Theatre in April of 1947. Combining comedy, sadness and haunting beauty, the play entranced the Fargo audience.

These and several other plays and operas at the Fargo Theatre during the 1940's combined to add a special dimension to the entertainment offerings the public had previously come to expect from "the moving picture houses."



The entire cast of the popular WDAY Barn Dance which broadcast every Friday night in the 1930's from the stage of the Fargo Theatre.



March 27, 1937 — Liebenberg's Art Moderne Re-design

The most modern and up-to-date theatre in North and South Dakota was what Al Anson of Duluth, district manager for the Minnesota Amusement Company (of Minneapolis), predicted when the Fargo was to reopen in March of 1937 after a \$40,000 remodeling job scheduled to be carried out in only five weeks.

Plans called for a complete "clean out" to the bare walls. And the man who drew up the plans was none other than Jack Liebenberg, whose movie theatre designs were of consistently high quality. Liebenberg was the most active theatre architect in the Upper Midwest. From 1928 to 1941, his firm designed over 200 theatres, the majority of which were in the Art Deco or Art Moderne Style, at which Jack Liebenberg was a master.

Liebenberg was in the first graduating class (1916) of the School of Architecture at the University of Minnesota. It wasn't until 1923 that Liebenberg, who by then had formed a partnership with Seeman Kaplan (who was to become his brother-in-law), designed his first theatre, the Arion, in northeast Minneapolis. In 1928 the firm was hired to design the Granada Theatre in Minneapolis (which is now

the Suburban World). Liebenberg created an illusionary garden effect, with Spanish motifs, for the interior, in the atmospheric style. Outstanding as this design was, it was Liebenberg's creative solution to the acoustical problems in building a theatre for sound which established his reputation as a movie expert. Liebenberg and Kaplan became the "house architects" for the prominent Minneapolis theatre owners Finkelstein and Ruben. When these owners later sold out to the Paramount Corporation, Liebenberg and Kaplan worked for the new owners, which brought them many remodeling jobs for small town theatres owned by the company.

Between 1928 and 1934, Liebenberg's designs were in a transitional stage. Theatre designs throughout the country were moving quickly away from the baroque and renaissance eclectic styles of the twenties toward the Deco motifs of the early thirties. There was still, however, some combining of the styles. An excellent example of Liebenberg's mastery of juxtaposing the two styles is the Campus Theatre in Minneapolis.

By the middle thirties, Liebenberg's designs began embracing the Moderne or

Streamlined Deco style, with its smooth, clean, flowing lines and geometric shapes. The St. Paul Garrick, a remodeling job for the firm, demonstrates well how although changing only a marquee and sign, a whole facade was transformed into an eye-catching creation of colored metal and light. The Hollywood Theatre in northeast Minneapolis and the Time Theatre in Austin, Minnesota, are other excellent examples of Liebenberg's development of rectilinear and geometric themes.

In 1936 Liebenberg was awarded the commission to remodel the Fargo Theatre.

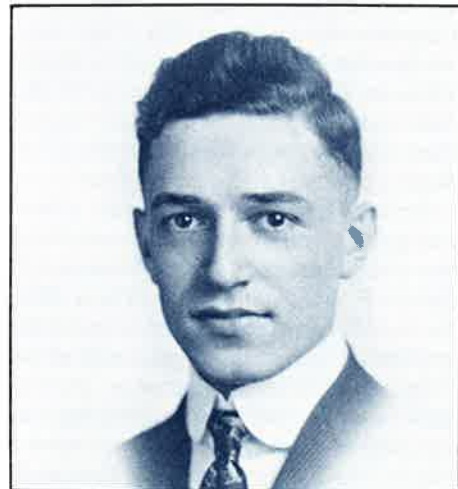
"No simple problem," Jack Liebenberg is quoted in the March 16, 1937, *Fargo Forum*, "was this transformation in which an architectural ogre of the past belonging to the ancient hierarchy of the architectural baroque was treated and ministered to in the fountain of architectural youth, commonly called international or modern style."

"Form most needs follow function." Louis Sullivan, architect of the Chicago Civic Opera, and father of the modern style of architecture, coined the term; and Liebenberg believed him.

"In the completion of the Fargo Theatre," he is quoted, "the architects have kept uppermost in mind the philosophical thought so ably expressed by Sullivan."

If the architect appears to be waxing eloquent, consider the following descriptive comments by the unnamed *Forum* reporter.

"The accenting motif (horizontal coursings of light) was accomplished in the unique treatment of the organ or pendentive sections of the



The man who re-designed the Fargo Theatre in the Art Moderne style, Jack Liebenberg, premiere theatre architect of the upper midwest, c. 1925.

proscenium arch. Here has been brought into play architectural forms and lighting suggestive of the swells and tremolos of the organ note as if being played upon veritable strings neon light.

If one but half closes his eyes he is carried away by the ethereal sensations produced by the colorful harmony of light used in this room (auditorium)."

Liebenberg used indirect neon lighting to produce the unusual 'cold' reds and 'warm' blues. He installed especially built dimmer switches (a theatre innovation at the time) to enable the entire entourage of color to be raised or lowered with the same skill or abandon as the organist when he is called upon to interpret an exotic composition in music.

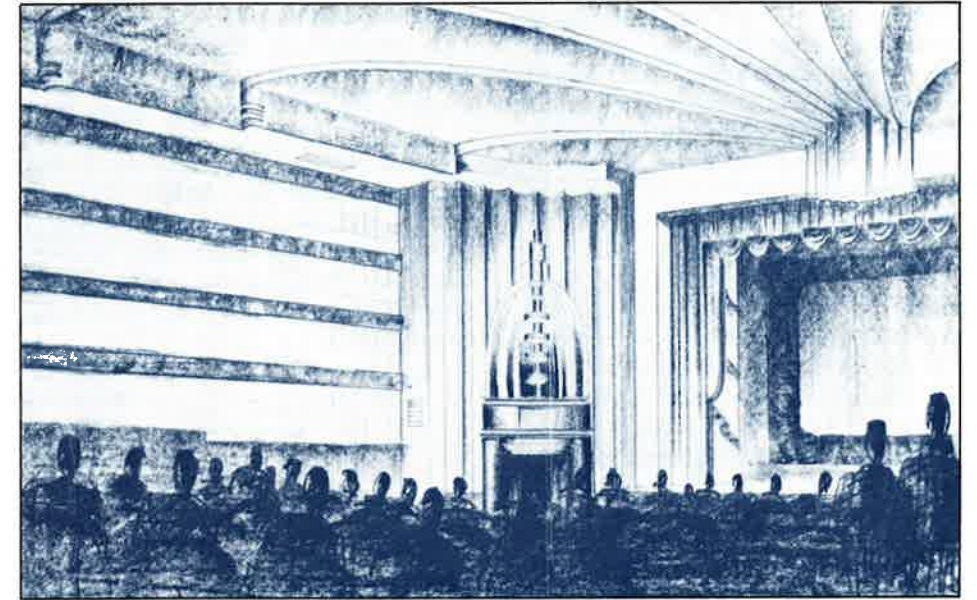
One of the more interesting and probably the most outstanding feature of the entire lighting system was that it was built in, not added onto. It was a "structural" and functional part of the design rather than being hung like Christmas decorations.

Colors, many of them, were also an integral part of the overall design. Morocco brown, chartreuse and blue gray were combined in the decorative treatment of the entresole, or mezzanine, lounge. Flesh-colored and green mirrors graced the walls. From the mezzanine one could look down into the lobby and see accents of rare African mahogany wood veneers combined harmoniously with a blue mirrored ceiling. The foyer on the lower level was finished in soft tones of coral, amber, maize, yellow and white. Glass and gold mirrors covered the ceiling.

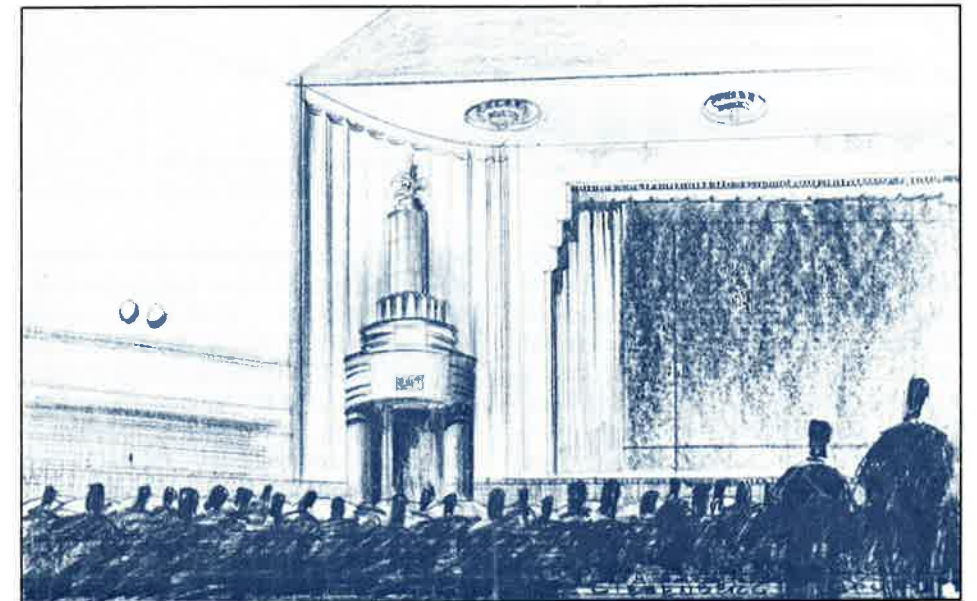
New seats were also installed, which were also designed in the streamlined style. And, consistent with the primary purpose of the renovation, which was to attract more patrons, the Minnesota Amusement Company, the then Theatre operators, installed a new air conditioning system. Liebenberg was proud to say that the system was the adiabatic type of air conditioning (changing of air without gain or loss of heat). The Fargo Theatre was the first theatre of its size in the country in which that type had been installed.

Another innovation introduced by Liebenberg and the Theatre owners was an entirely new sound system. Billed as RCA high fidelity sound, the system incorporated the latest discoveries and improvements for perfect presentation of sound and talking motion pictures.

The combination of all these design elements affirmed a simple faith in the power of the machine to simplify and



Auditorium rendering by Jack Liebenberg (final version) in black crayon over pencil on tracing paper.



Auditorium rendering (alternate treatment) in black crayon over graphite on tracing paper.



First floor lobby as it appeared in the late 1930's after the Art Moderne remodeling.

change life for the better. "A sense of inevitability and harmony (typified) classic Streamlined arrangements as style (served) function effortlessly," commented Herbert Scherer in his booklet accompanying an exhibition of Liebenberg's work.

The transformation complete, the Fargo Theatre re-opened on March 27, 1937, at 12:30 p.m. with *Swing High, Swing Low*, with Carole Lombard and Fred MacMurray. Charles Butterworth appeared in the main comedy role, with Jean Dixon supporting him. All this was proclaimed boldly and proudly on the new extended and streamlined marquee

with more advantageous billing features. This modernized marquee was the external beacon of hope and change for the new, old Fargo Theatre.

(Portions of the above were drawn from a booklet written by Herbert Scherer, entitled *Marquee on Main Street*, which accompanied the University Gallery exhibition honoring the work of Jack Liebenberg at the University of Minnesota in 1982.)



Eddie and Hildegard

When the Fargoans arrived on the set, representing an outdoor scene, Jimmy and Claudette were being photographed picnicking beside a lake. Jimmy chased her around a tree and she gave him a shove that landed him in the water. That was the end of the scene.

Jimmy Stewart and Claudette Colbert had just finished a scene from *It's a Wonderful World*, on the MGM lot in Hollywood, film capital of the world. The Fargoans were Eddie and Hildegard Usselman Kraus, who were on the first of several visits to Hollywood to advise on films' prospects in the Midwest.

Both Eddie and Hildegard reached this level of influence from early starts in show businesses as teenagers.

When Eddie was 15 years old, growing up in Davenport, Iowa, he answered an ad to work at the Grand Opera House there, carrying water on trays between acts to the patrons. Two months later the manager offered him a position as assistant in the theatre box office, which he quickly accepted. He stayed "there" for 45 years.

Hildegard's contributions to the show business world have been as an entertainer, giving virtuoso performances on the organ and piano as accompaniment to silent films, vaudeville and performances on live radio. She remembers going to silent movies with her father when she was six or seven years

old. "Papa used to take me to the shows. Both of us would come home and play the theme by ear." Hildegard started accompanying films on the piano at Mandan and Bismarck theatres when she was a high school freshman, putting her good hear to work picking out love, adventure and villainy themes and blending them to highlight the action on the screen.

But both of them were to move on to Fargo to further their respective careers.

Hildegard arrived first. She came to Fargo as a would-be accounting student. However, she was quickly drawn into the circle of young musicians who hung around the Stone Music Company (now Schmitt's) on 1st Avenue, and studied at the Dakota Conservatory of Music upstairs. She tells how she got her first job:

"The Orpheum Theatre Management was looking for someone to play the score that came with the picture *When Knighthood was in Flower*, starring Marion Davies. Someone recommended me, and I tried out. They hired me. Several others tried out, but they couldn't read the score, as it was all in manuscript copy. Well, to tell the truth, I couldn't read it either. But I was able to bluff and fake it through. I never saw so many little specks and

squiggles above the ledger line in the score, before or since."

When the State Theatre opened, she played with an orchestra for pictures there. Finkelstein and Ruben from Minneapolis had bought the State a few years later and remodeled it into a beautiful atmospheric theatre with twinkling stars and the illusion of clouds rolling overhead, for a ceiling. The new owners sent her to MacPhail School of Music in Minneapolis once a month for lessons for about two years. At that time, Eddie Dunstedter and Lawrence Goldberg were teaching there, and she alternated lessons with them. Hildegard recalls that the first music cue sheet she used was for the film *Birth of a Nation*.

Hildegard spent the next few years cueing and playing at most of the theatres in the area. She subbed at the Garrick, then a few doors north of the Straus Men's Store on Broadway. She substituted at the Princess, between 4th and 5th streets on N.P. Avenue. On her free days, she'd travel to Grand Forks, Minot and Bismarck, performing what she calls an "added attraction" and accompanied vaudeville shows.

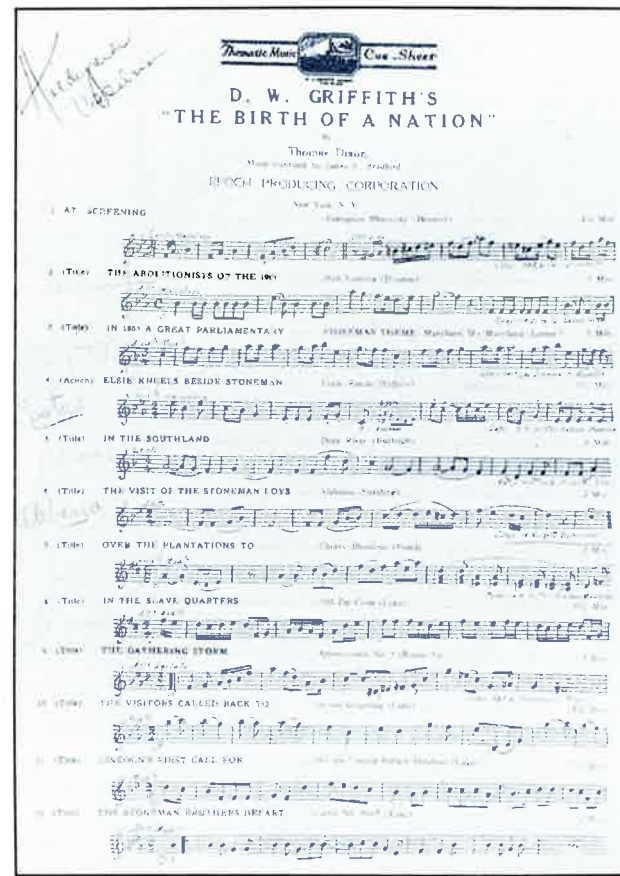
In 1925, Ed Kraus came to Fargo from the show business in Chicago and St. Louis, lured by the fact that North Dakota at that time outlawed entertainment on Sunday.

"I wanted to do some fishing up here and get away from that seven-day-a-week grind. But it wasn't long before Sunday theatre came to North Dakota, too, and I helped get it started."

Ed Kraus came to Fargo to take over



Hildegard as she appeared in the July, 1930, RADIO DIGEST - "an accomplished little performer on the organ over station WDAY."



Hildegard's first music cue sheet, *The Birth of a Nation*.

advertising for the Garrick, Orpheum, Grand and State theatres in Fargo and the Lyceum in Moorhead.

By that time, however, Hildegard Usselman was playing at the State. It was there that Eddie and Hildegard met. Eddie sent her notes expressing his admiration, but she shyly avoided him.

Hildegard recalls the "restaurant romance":

"He saw me and that was the start of a fast romance. We didn't go together long before getting married — as we had no place to court, so to speak, and it was winter. I couldn't take him to my rooming house, and he couldn't take me to his hotel. So we sat in a cafe, and just kept ordering food which we didn't want, just so we could stay and hold hands. How times have changed."

They married January 9, 1926, three months after they met. The alliance gave them both a chance to see moviemaking and movie stars at close range. Eddie was managing five theatres in the Fargo-Moorhead area, and was invited to Hollywood to advise Paramount and Warner Bros. executives there about how movie projects then in the works would appeal to Midwestern audiences. The Krauses were quite the team, getting the red carpet treatment, and advising Boris

Karloff, Don Ameche, Judy Garland, Jimmy Cagney, and George Raft, and others.

Hildegard was fast becoming a star in her own right in a different galaxy. In addition to playing piano and organ at local and nearby theatres, she accepted an offer to become full-time organist at WDAY Radio, a position she held for 28

years. Her unique stylings of musical favorites made her broadcasts some of the best loved radio programs ever to come out of the Fargo-Moorhead area. Such long-running shows as "Dream Time" and "Lady of the Evening" have established for Hildegard a permanent place in the history of musical performers of the Midwest.

In the meantime Eddie Kraus was not only running most of the theatres in Fargo-Moorhead, but he was also identifying himself with civic activities. He was a post commander of the American Legion, active in 40 and 8 affairs, manager of the local drum and bugle corps, and a member of the Fargo Kiwanis club, the Eagles Lodge and Masonic Lodge. He was a founder of the Bison Boosters, and was a member of the Fargo-Moorhead Twins baseball club, the Shriners, the Elks, the VFW, and served as vice-president of the Fargo Civic Memorial Auditorium Commission.

His motion picture management expertise and civic activities combined to garner him an invitation to the White House. In 1945, President Truman invited the war activities committee of the motion picture industry, which had been active in war bond drives, to a special meeting and banquet to praise them for their patriotic efforts. Ed Kraus was one of the 200 hard working motion picture executives so honored at the December 5 affair at the Willard Hotel, and at the special White House meeting held earlier that day.

(Continued on page 12)



Blackstone the Magician tries a trick on Ed Kraus.

A Tour of the Fargo Theatre . . .

Although the Fargo Theatre has undergone two significant alterations, it still retains a strong sense of its primary function — a place for people of all ages to step off the sidewalk into a world of fun and entertainment.

Very little is left of the original design by Buechner and Orth. Traces of the 1926 design can be seen in the original stained glass exit signs and some of the original backdrops on stage.

The auditorium, however, retains much of architect Jack Liebenberg's remodeling in the streamlined Art Moderne style. The transformation of the ceiling by Liebenberg into a composition of planery surfaces superimposed on each other in sinuous curves, and the corbeled treatment of the proscenium arch still leave a tingling effect upon the movie goers' imagination when the play of light is released onto these areas. The horizontal coursings of neon light on the walls continue to please the viewer while at the same time focus his attention onto the screen. Missing, however, are the fountain-like neon constructs which had appeared over the exits on either side of the stage.

In 1952 the theatre lobby was completely stripped of its 1937 look and further "modernized" to the style seen today. The ticket box office is now on the south end of the main floor (moved from the center of the lobby), and a mezzanine level now exists, created in 1952 when a floor was constructed to seal off the former two-story lobby.

In the years since, other changes have been made, primarily behind the scenes to augment the range and capacity of the Mighty Wurlitzer organ.



. . . and Some of Those Who Make It Work.



Craven Nichols tunes one of the Mighty Wurlitzer's over 1,000 pipes.



Gene Shannon prepares for installation of new boiler.



E. S. "Gene" Sweeney examines the huge light board back stage.



(L to R) Assistant to manager, David Caulfield, and manager Dave Knudtson.



Sonia Carlson wires in new gang switches on the organ switch board.



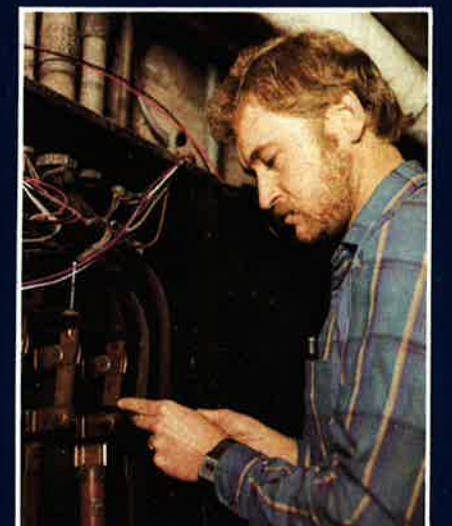
Lance Johnson and Craven Nichols wire in traps in new organ percussion chamber.



Gerry Schjelderup installs doors on outer lobby (doors had been missing for 30 years, were later found hidden in basement).



Jay Kleinjan gets ready to paint balcony ceiling.



Jim Peda takes a voltage reading from an electrical panel.



Kay Swedberg restores an old letter rack for the marquee.



Eddie and Hildegard (standing) with Gig Young (left), Mrs. Robert Young (center), and Robert Young (right), on one of their Hollywood excursions.

Ed Kraus retired in 1960. He commented that although the movie outlook appeared gloomy to him,

"... there isn't a city in the United States that has a more metropolitan taste than Fargo-Moorhead. The best of everything really is appreciated."

By the time Eddie retired, Hildegard had stopped working at WDAY. She herself had retired in 1954. She had "cried every morning for a year" after leaving, so deeply did she miss the work and her friends there. She eventually adjusted to her new life with Eddie, as they

both took the time to relax and enjoy each other. Then, in 1964, Eddie died. Hildegard recalls the pain:

"After I lost my husband, I couldn't seem to pick up the pieces. We had no family together, and I'm kind of a loner, or I was, anyway. I just sat there and didn't do anything until some friends of mine from the Fine Arts Club said I shouldn't let my talent go. So I got started again playing for weddings, programs and fashion shows."

Her retirement was officially over in 1976 when the local American Theatre

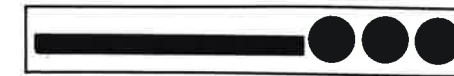
Organ Society chapter honored her at one of its silent movie nights. They had presented an audiovisual program on her career, then introduced her to thunderous applause.

Since then she has played several special organ concerts at the Fargo Theatre and at Weld Hall as part of Moorhead State University's Summer Cinema silent film series. And, once again, she is scoring specially selected silent films. She has come full circle, and in the process, earned her title, *The Incomparable Hildegard*. The special contributions her music has made toward enriching our lives easily qualify her for that appellation. Ted Larson, Professor of Film Studies at MSU, stated in his letter of nomination of Hildegard as YWCA Woman of the Year for 1983:

"There is something more than superb artistry and dedication that makes Hildegard's talent a truly unique one. It is the way she has, over the years, generously shared her music and encouraged so many others to develop their abilities in the arts."

Hildegard Usselman Kraus is truly a very special person. Together she and her late husband, Eddie, have given Fargo-Moorhead audiences quite a show. We are very fortunate to continue to have Hildegard as Fargo's "First Lady of Entertainment."

Ed Kraus in his second floor office in the 1950's.



Pictures and Promotions

The business of selling movie studio products during the late '40's through the 1960's was a mutually supporting alliance amongst the theatre owners, the local theatre managers and local businesses. Promotions, gimmicks and tie-ups to other products were part of the fun and the economics of filling movie houses.

Helpful hints came weekly from the Minnesota Amusement Company. Consider the following suggested advertising copy put out for *Mothers-In-Law-Day*: "Your Mother had her Day two weeks ago . . . now show your mother-in-law you are thinking of her also and she'll love you for it . . . First 25 mothers-in-law only with their sons-in-law get to see movie free and will receive a free dinner at the Times Cafe at 322 Broadway."

Most managers appreciated the importance of their theatre's standing in the community. During the Second World War, Ed Kraus organized special events such as "Junior G.I. Joe and Jane" shows. One of these was held on March 31, 1945, which provided a free show for the sons and daughters of armed service personnel — with tie-ups to local schools, the U.S.O. and entertainers from WDAY Radio. Each of the 325 children attending received a California Sunkist orange.

A promotion for the Bing Crosby movie *Little Boy Lost* which worked well in the 1950's might not be considered appropriate today. Advertisements were run in the lost and found classified section of the *Fargo Forum*. In bold, large print "LITTLE BOY LOST" was followed by an invitation to see the movie, in smaller print.

The Moorhead Theatre across the river ran a few promotions worth noting here. The 1955 Miss Universe Contest to select the Minnesota entry was held at the Moorhead. Ed Kraus, who was "city manager" for all local Minnesota Amusement Company theatres, coordinated the details for this event, giving it prominent mention in movie trailers at each of his theatres. When the movie *Martin Luther* showed there, letters from Ed Kraus went out to every pastor within a 150-mile radius of Fargo-



DEAR FRIEND:

YOU! CAN JOIN THE FARGO THEATRE MA and PA KETTLE "BUCKET BRIGADE"

And Don't Forget

They Are Here In
THEIR FUNNIEST

ALL LAUGH MOVIE



IN APPRECIATION

Of Past Patronage We are
DEDICATING

MONDAY, MAY 16th

To Our

RURAL FRIENDS . . .

Extra Special Show Starting at 11:20 A. M.

Doors Open at 11:00 A. M.

Other Features at 1:50 - 3:44 - 5:38 - 7:32 - 9:31



This Is the 6 Gal. "MA AND PA"
KETTLE BUCKET . . .

AND HERE'S HOW
ON THE ABOVE
SPECIAL TO YOU
MONDAY ONLY — MAY 16th

While the Limited Supply of these Metal
Buckets last, you can be the receiver of one
on presentation of this Herald at the Fargo
Theatre Box Office Monday, May 16th.

You'll Be Amazed
How Useful This Bucket Can Be in
Numerous Daily Chores.

Moorhead, offering block ticket discounts.

Religious movies held at the Fargo Theatre, such as *The Robe* (1953) and *The Ten Commandments* (1957), were also promoted heavily through local and nearby churches.

Sometimes the promotions had nothing at all to do with the particular movies being shown. Knerr Dairies sponsored "free movies for the kiddies," specifically those kiddies who saved the "Budget Symbols" from 5 cartons of KNERR Grade "A" Milk. Another similar scheme, only run in reverse, can be seen in the ad "Kids! Become a foreign coin collector — 15 genuine coins plus GIANT FULL COLOR COIN MAP FREE at this theatre — must attend each Saturday matinee to receive complete set."

Ed Kraus never really had anything to worry about regarding the kiddie business. One time in 1930 he made two excellent tie-ups with a local bank and a broadcasting station on his merchandising of *Swing High*.

He set up two stands inside the lobby — with white-coated attendants who served all the kiddies with pink lemonade on their way in and gave them a sack of Jumbo peanuts on their way out.

The bank paid for the peanuts and the broadcasting station, the lemonade. The radio station announced five times daily for three days prior to the opening of the picture all about the free lemonade and peanuts. The lemonade and peanuts were very befitting in as much as *Swing High* was a circus type of picture. Over 1,000 children showed up, along with many adults who accompanied them.

These marketing tactics and stunts were not very subtle or refined, but they sure worked.



KIDS! JOIN THE WORLD COIN CLUB!
Become a Foreign Coin Collector!

15 GENUINE COINS
Plus GIANT FULL COLOR COIN MAP FREE

Different foreign coins given away
FREE every SATURDAY
for 15 consecutive weeks!
Starting SAT. MAR. 22 - 1 & 3 P.M.

PRIZE CONTEST!
WIN Giant World Map with 60 different foreign coins! . . . awarded to the Boy or Girl whose coin collection is considered in neatness and arrangement and Best statement in 25 words or less: "I ENJOYED BEING A MEMBER OF WORLD COIN CLUB Because . . ."
BE SURE YOUR COLLECTION IS COMPLETE WITH ALL 15 COINS SO YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR GRAND PRIZE and other valuable awards!

THE FIRST WEEK . . . SEE
"HEIDI and PETER"
PLUS
4 - COLOR CARTOONS - 4
Kiddies 24c - Jrs. 50c - Adults 65c - Tax incl.
Starting SAT. MARCH 22 - 1 & 3 P. M.
FARGO Theatre

Revival as a Repertory Cinema

In the 1950's and '60's, movie audiences dwindled. The Mighty Wurlitzer was no longer in use. By 1928, with the advent of the "talkies", the organ had been displaced as accompanist and sound provider for silent films. And by 1948, the organ was no longer used for radio shows and movie prologues. The organ sat in the orchestra pit for nearly 25 years in a litter of popcorn shells, candy wrappers and dust.

However, the organ was not totally forgotten. A strong and persistent curiosity in the organ by one particular individual is the beginning of the story about the revival of both the organ and the Theatre itself.

In 1959 when his parents were building a new home in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, Lance Johnson asked them if they could save space for a pipe organ. Johnson was 19 at the time, and this request was not at all unusual. For Lance Johnson by then had already founded the Johnson Organ Company, Inc. at the age of 14. He had been playing organs for the previous three or four years, every Friday night during junior high school at the Roy Olson Music Store.

With his parents' agreement to provide the space, Lance Johnson marched up to Fargo to buy the Mighty Wurlitzer, which he first discovered when he had taken a date to a movie there.

"The manager let me look at it. The console was in an incredibly poor condition — dirty beyond belief. I found the blower in the basement and started it up with a roar. When I went upstairs to check the pipes, the blower starter began to smoke. The manager could smell it. You know how deathly afraid the theatre business is of fire. He rapidly showed me the door, and wouldn't let me back," Johnson recalled. "I tried the next manager years later, but he was even more negative." Johnson gave up the quest for years, but he never forgot the hidden treasure he'd discovered.

In 1973, he happened to meet Dave Knudtson through a mutual interest in classic films. Knudtson had just moved to Fargo from Grand Forks to take over as operations manager for KTHI-TV. Johnson had learned that Dave had an advantage he didn't — Dave was a part-time employee of the Plitt Theatre chain. Together they approached the two managers, Doug Owens and Marv Sopko, and made their pitch. The local chapter of the American Theatre Organ

The Red River Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society proudly presents

SILENT MOVIE NIGHT
at the FARGO THEATRE

"WINGS"
WITH CLARA BOW CHARLES (Buddy) ROGERS RICHARD ARLEN GARY COOPER
A Paramount Picture

musical score created and performed by Lance Johnson at the console of the mighty WURLITZER pipe organ.

Friday, November 4 and Saturday, November 5
8:00 p.m.

Society (ATOS) wanted their permission to restore and play the organ at absolutely no cost to the theatre. They agreed.

Johnson and Knudtson spent the next two nights, after the movie crowds had gone home, cleaning and vacuuming decades of dust. They got the organ playing, (only three notes!) although "it sounded like two cats with their tails tied together," according to Johnson. But the two organ enthusiasts could see the potential. Announced Knudtson, "This is a magnificent instrument. The public has to hear it."

And hear it they did, in 1974, when the first *Silent Film Night* was sponsored by the ATOS. The program included a Harold Lloyd comedy, organ solos, even an old fashioned singalong. Boyd Christenson of Prairie Public Television (then with WDAY) was the master of ceremonies. Ted Larson, of Moorhead State University's speech and theatre department and the area's premiere classic film expert, took care of the program and publicity.

"I'll never forget that moment,"

Johnson said. His wife Judy told him 20 minutes before curtain time that he had sold out the house. In fact, 200 people were turned away.

Since then, the ATOS has presented two silent movie nights each year with organ concerts. Most are sold out. Two of those very special evenings, however, require special comment.

In 1978, the greatest actress of the silent screen, Miss Lillian Gish, appeared in person at the Fargo Theatre. She was D. W. Griffith's leading lady, the star of *Birth of a Nation* (1915), as well as a dozen other masterpieces. She has appeared in over 100 films. At her special evening at the Fargo Theatre, Miss Gish showed a clip from *Birth of a Nation*, and told anecdotes about her fabulous career. The feature film of the evening was *Way Down East*, scored live by Lance Johnson on the Wurlitzer organ with Miss Gish sitting closely right behind him.

Colleen Moore, the great comedienne of the silent screen, came to the Fargo Theatre in 1981. She became an inter-



Colleen Moore signs autographs during her 1981 appearance for Silent Movie Night at the Fargo Theatre.

national star with the film, *Flaming Youth*, and set fashion trends around the world with her "flapper" styles. During her special *Tribute* at the Fargo, she shared stories about her career. Her 1926 hit *Ella Cinders* was shown. A special concert appearance by *The Incomparable Hildegard* made it a night of unforgettable magic.

In addition to silent films, and the showing of successful current films, the Fargo Theatre has also presented a wide variety of cultural attractions.

Dancing elephants, a performing zucchini, a singing dog, jugglers,

dancers and musicians livened up the stage in the late fall of 1981 when the Lake Agassiz Arts Council sponsored a family variety matinee performed by The Plain People. In 1984, the Mahkahta Dance Theatre, Fargo-Moorhead's own professional modern dance troupe, presented original dances set to a variety of music, sounds and poetry.

The Fargo Theatre, however, had actually closed in the spring of 1983. The Plitt Theatre chain which had been operating the theatre had decided to pull out of Fargo. They sold their two theatres here to Cinema Entertainment Corpora-

tion (CEC), who asked the ATOS if they would take over the monthly lease. The CEC proposed to donate all the furnishings (seats, projectors, concessions, equipment, pipe organ, etc.). It didn't take the ATOS long to decide. On July 1, 1983, the Fargo Theatre re-opened under the new management of the Red River Chapter of the ATOS with a one-week run of David Lean's 1965 epic, *Doctor Zhivago*.

The chapter at this point realized that the seriousness of their new venture required a separate organization with its own legal status. They formed the non-profit Fargo Theatre Management Corporation, and selected a six-member board of directors. They were Lance Johnson, Ted Larson, Dr. Bill Armstrong, Pat Kelly, Neil Kovash, and Sonia Carlson. The board hired Dave Knudtson to manage the theatre.

The real celebration took place about a year later. On April 27, 1984, a cold wind didn't deter the excited crowd who began arriving at 6:30 p.m. Across the street a searchlight was in operation. Under the marquee, the local chapter of the Horseless Carriage Club of America provided some beautiful vintage cars to line the street. By 8:00 all seats were filled as Lloyd Collins played the opening chords of "That's Entertainment." As the console began descending, the large gold velvet curtains parted to reveal a 19-piece stage band. The Harry Myers Band, under the direction of James Ployhar, picked up the strains from the organ and continued to recreate the sounds of the "Swing Era" along with the Wurlitzer. Boyd Christenson and Doug Hamilton were masters of ceremonies. Steven Tweed, a local impressionist, did a Jack Benny routine and a Ted Lewis rendition of "When My Baby Smiles at Me." Movie time was a triple bill: Charlie Chaplin's *The Pawnshop*, Harry Langdon's *All Night Long* and Harold Lloyd's *Number Please*. Grant Norman, a soloist with the Red River Dance and Performing Company, tap danced to "Top Hat" with the band, and sang "Be My Love." It was indeed a grand evening.

In the summer of 1984 a new organization was formed to enlist the aid of Fargo residents to help ensure the future of the Fargo Theatre. The "Friends of the Fargo" are engaged in three activities: fund raising to help defray the theatre's annual operating expenses and pay for needed repairs; promotion of movies and special events; and maintenance of the theatre's physical plant, including painting and carpentry



James Ployhar at the piano, with Harry Myers keeping an eye on him.

projects. Original officers were Leo Wilking, Janna Warcup, Peggy Faleide, and Gary Reinke.

In 1985, the Fargo Heritage Society arranged for the showing of historic films about old Fargo and North Dakota in the 1930's and 40's, during National Historic Preservation Week. Also, as part of the nation-wide celebrations for the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for the Arts, the North Dakota Council on Arts sponsored a SHOWCASE evening of dance, drama and music at the Fargo. During National Dance Week, the Red River Dance Company presented a half-hour dance program prior to the showing of a famous Hollywood musical, on each of four successive nights.

"We've had our peaks and valleys, but we're learning," is how Dave Knudtson looks at the past few years. He's still finding out what audiences in this area want to see. He and others dedicated to keeping the theatre going are still finding out how much work it takes to keep the building itself going. But, he says, "I really believe we're here to stay."



Steven Tweed as Ted Lewis.



The Mighty Wurlitzer

The organ in the Fargo Theatre was especially built for the theatre by the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company in North Tonawanda, New York, and installed during February, 1926. It required two box cars to transport it to Fargo.

The organ is housed in chambers, one on each side of the theatre. The console in the pit is only a small part of the organ. There are over 1,000 miles of wire and over 40,000 soldered connections which make up the control system of the organ. The compressed air is supplied by two blowers in the basement.

The original portion of the organ contained two manuals and seven ranks (sets) and was referred to as a style "E". In January, 1979, the ATOS members installed the three-manual console and relay, wiring it to the original organ. This huge relay, which operates on compressed air, was placed backstage on the right side. Later, a vibraphone was installed and a player piano was placed in the orchestra pit which plays from the console.

Later, a 16-foot string and 16-foot Diaphone were installed back stage on the left to help support the powerful bass of the organ.

The "Toy Counter" of the organ contains: Bass Drum, Cymbals, Snare Drum, Tambourine, Castanets, Triangle, Wood Block, Horses Hooves, Train Bell, Auto Horn, Train Whistle (Steam), Sleigh Bells, Tom Tom, Kettle Drum, Fire Alarm, Bird Call, Door Bell, Hissing Steam, Crash Cymbal, Jazz Whistle, and Siren.

"Organ accompaniment for a silent film is largely improvisation, although most organists plan some melodies and variations in advance," according to Dave Knudtson. The organist needs to know the film well. However, Hildegard Kraus notes that there never was a pre-run of a picture, so on opening night it was a case of watching the picture and making up the music to fit the scene as the movie progressed. "Very few pictures came with a suggestion of what to play, although occasionally there were cue sheets," she says.

Along with the organ music came many special effects, usually for the organ concerts or singalong which were part of the evenings' entertainment. Hildegard recalls one solo in particular:



"GEE, DAD, IT'S A WURLITZER." — The Fargo Theatre pipe organ which has been restored by volunteers of the Red River Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society.

"If an exhibitor should be forced to choose between a poor orchestra and a good organist, he should consider it his duty to give the organist the preference. After all, it is quality and not quantity that really counts. Besides, it has been my experience that audiences would rather hear music played extremely well than extremely loud."

CARL EDOUARDE,
Musical Director of the
Mark Strand Theatre,
New York, 1921



Hildegard rehearsing "Songs of Yesteryear" with WDAY announcer Ernie Brevik.



LLOYD COLLINS began his prolific musical career with the study of piano at age five, in Page, N.D. After attaining a college degree in music education, he accompanied performances of Peggy Lee and played in USO camps overseas. In addition to playing at the Fargo Theatre, Collins is organist for Olivet Lutheran Church.



DAVE KNUDTSON, manager of the Fargo Theatre, is a church organist at Bethany Lutheran Church in rural Shelly, Minnesota, and has a broad background in audio technology.



LANCE JOHNSON, originally from Fergus Falls, Minnesota, completed a degree in classical organ at Concordia College in Moorhead. In addition to being a theatre organist, Johnson builds and installs organs and is president of Johnson Organ Company.

"At the State Theatre I was featured every week with special effects in a spot light. One particular nice production I remember — I played Knee Deep in Daisies and other Daisy songs, a medley — and the operator had a color wheel that gave the illusion of the flowers falling on me and the organ. It was a real pretty effect, and incidentally my own idea."

Robert Hope-Jones, a remarkable Englishman, invented the "unit orchestra" concept which made it possible for every set of pipes to be played from every manual. This incredible new flexibility made the theatre organ, and organist, as much a part of the film as the actors, and brought a grandeur to theatres that is still evident in the Fargo Theatre to this day.



LORRAINE NELSON, only 20 years old, started playing the organ in seventh grade at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Hendrum, Minnesota. She is studying piano at North Dakota State University and classical organ at Concordia College.



PAT KELLY, originally from Halstad, Minnesota attended the Martinson School of Music in Fargo, majoring in piano. He was staff organist and pianist at WDAY Radio for 42 years.

Guest organists have included Rob Richards, Walt Strony, Harvey Gustafson, Lance Luce, Peter Nygaard, Lou Hurvitz, and, of course, Hildegard Kraus.

TYLER ENGBERG serves as a substitute organist and sells diesel equipment for Cummins.





Lance Johnson, President of the Fargo Theatre Management Corporation, gives checks to Wm. D. Powers, and Martha Powers Lepinski, former owners.

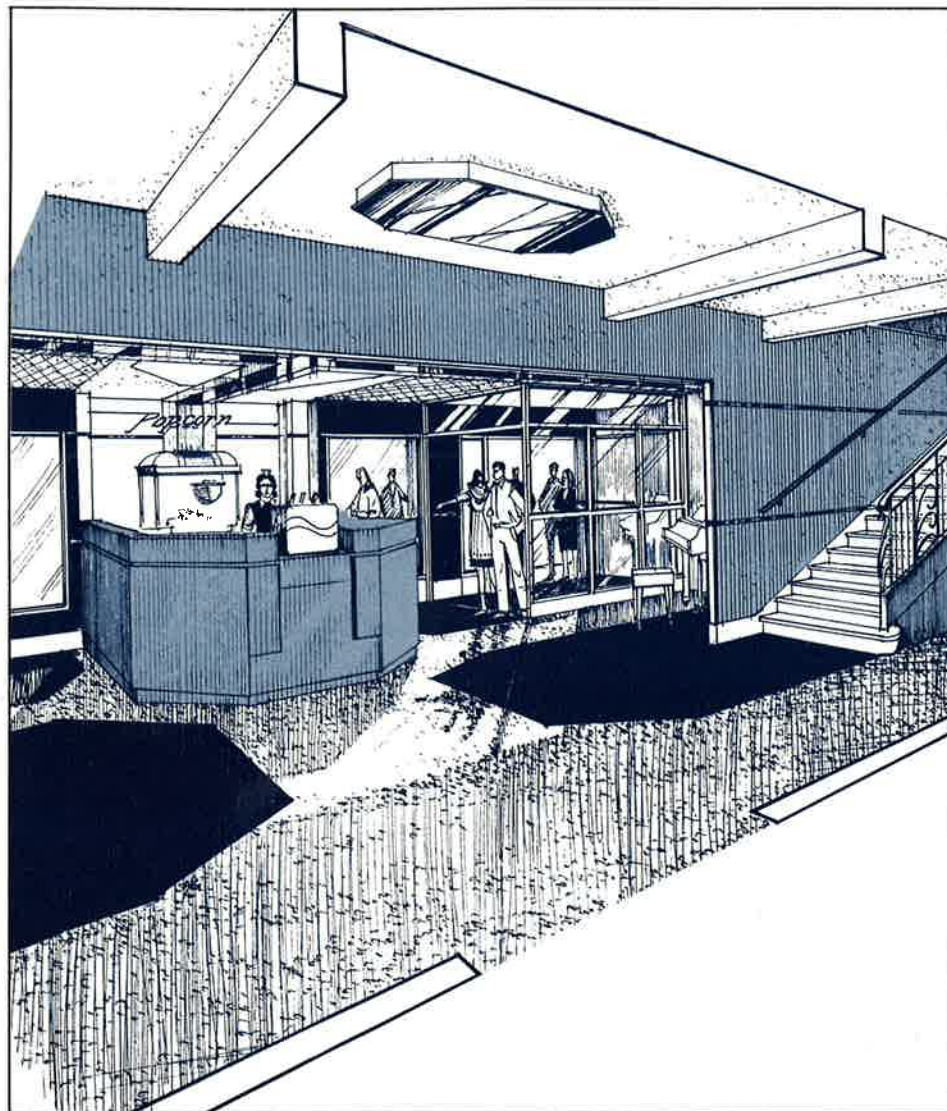


The Past is Prologue

On Friday, August 2, 1985, the Fargo Theatre Management Corporation officially acquired full ownership of the Theatre. The Corporation is chartered as a non-profit group, which means basically that the Theatre is in the community's hands. A drive will begin soon to raise funds to complete repair work, and carry out renovation to restore some of the excitement of the Art Moderne design, with upgrading to meet today's standards. The renovation philosophy is to highlight the best of the past, and upgrade where appropriate. In other words, maintain the continuity of design function and form.

Continuity can be seen also in the open-minded management of Dave Knudtson who is beginning to vary programming of movies and events with a flair reminiscent of Eddie Kraus.

Perhaps therein lies a clue to the Fargo Theatre's community value and historic significance. The Fargo Theatre, with its rich and colorful past, and its promise for the future, helps us to rediscover the entertainment values of the past with such programs as Silent Movie Night. It tells us a lot about who we were. And, no matter what we as a community do in response to the current financial challenge to keep the Theatre alive, it will tell us a lot about who we are.



Rendering of first floor lobby showing suggested alterations.



Concession stand, 1950's

Acknowledgements

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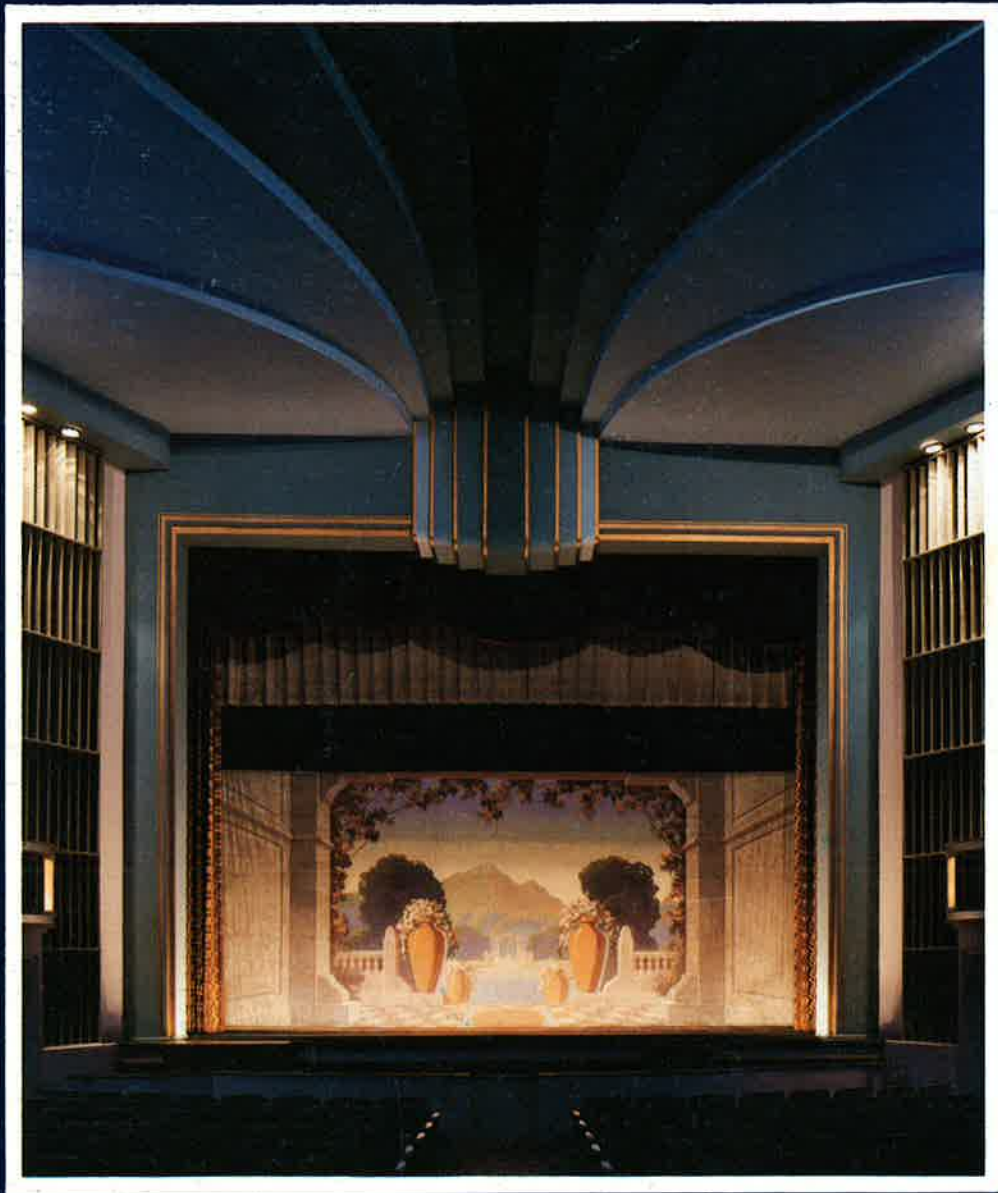
For those interested in further information, footnotes and bibliography are available on request.

Photographs & Illustrations

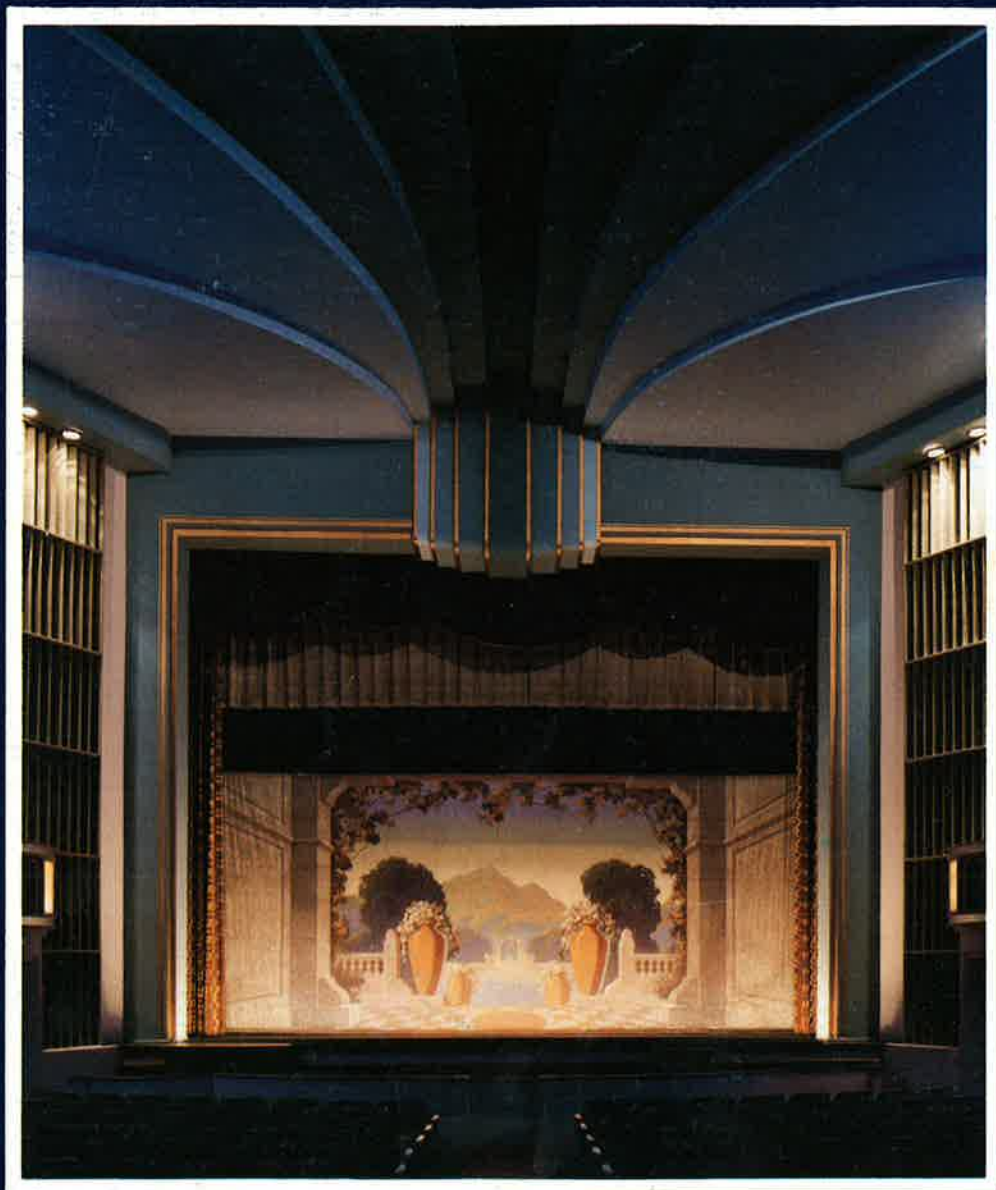
Cover: Photo: courtesy Bonanzaville (handtint: Kate Koshnick); Inside front cover: Photo: courtesy Hildegard Kraus. Page 1: Photo: courtesy Hildegard Kraus; Drawing: Henry Orth. Page 2: Advertisement, two photos: courtesy Fargo Forum. Page 3: Drawings: Henry Orth. Pages 4 and 5: Photos: courtesy Hildegard Kraus. Page 6: Photo (top): courtesy NW Arch. Archives; (bottom): courtesy Mrs. Jack Liebenberg. Page 7: Photos: courtesy NW Arch. Archives. Page 8: Photo: courtesy Radio Digest. Page 9: Photos: courtesy Hildegard Kraus. Pages 10 and 11: Photos: Jaime Penuel. Page 12: Photo (top): Hildegard Kraus; (bottom): courtesy Lance Johnson. Pages 13, 14, 15: Photos and advertisements: courtesy Lance Johnson. Pages 16 and 17: Photos: David Samson, courtesy Sonia Carlson. Page 18: Photo (top): Jaime Penuel; (bottom): courtesy Hildegard Kraus. Page 19: Photos: courtesy Lance Johnson; (bottom): Eric Swee. Page 20: Photo: Sonia Carlson; Drawing: Lee Watkins. Inside Back Cover: Photo: courtesy Lance Johnson. Back Cover: Photo Jaime Penuel.

About the Author

Daniel Cornejo is a community planner and historic preservation specialist. He graduated from Jamestown College and obtained his M.A. from the University of British Columbia, Canada. He has over a dozen years' experience in conservation-based planning and design. Prior to his arrival in Fargo in 1984, Mr. Cornejo was the Heritage Conservation Officer for Vancouver, B.C.



ENCORE
AT THE
FARGO THEATRE



DANIEL CORNEJO