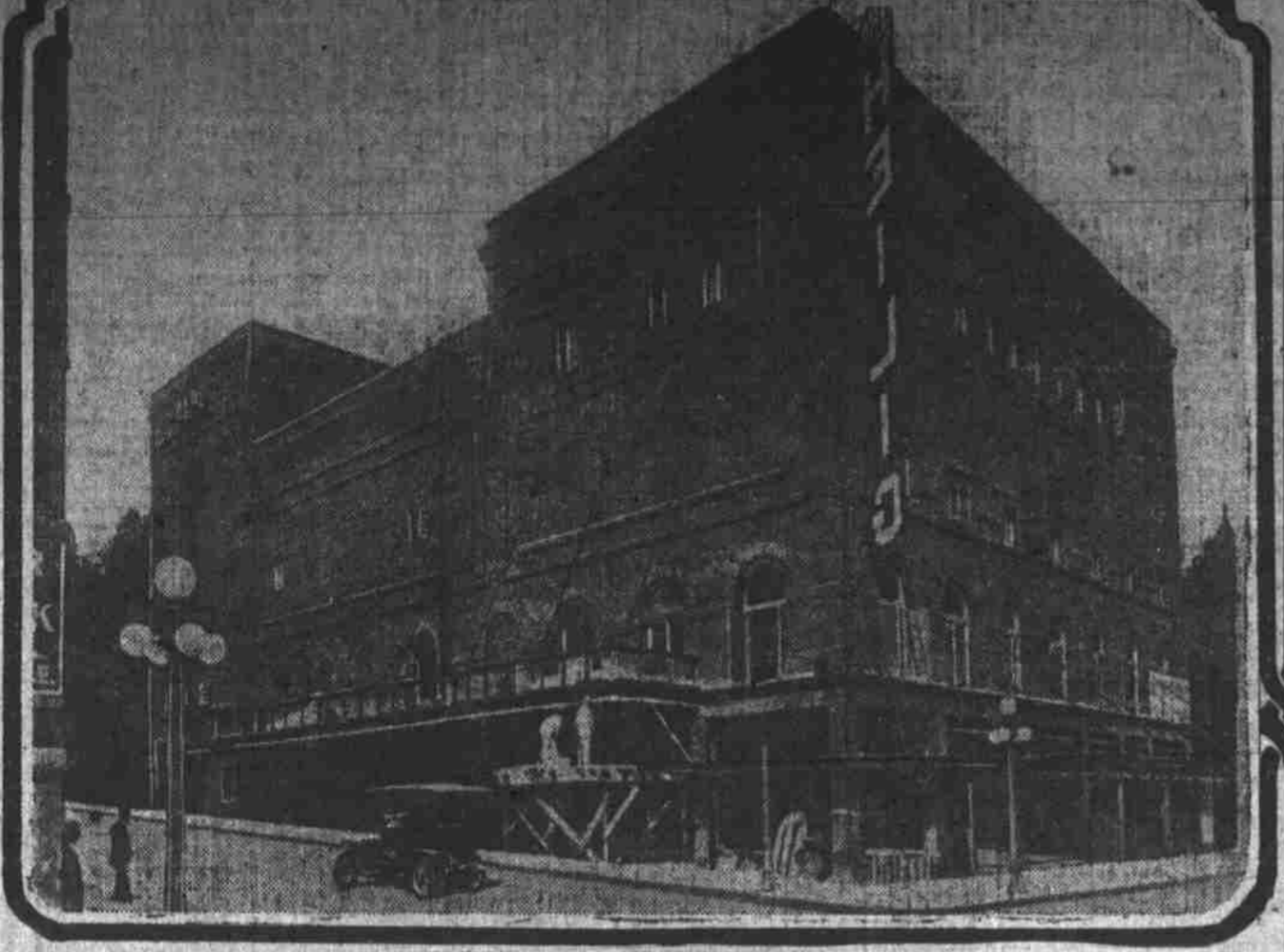
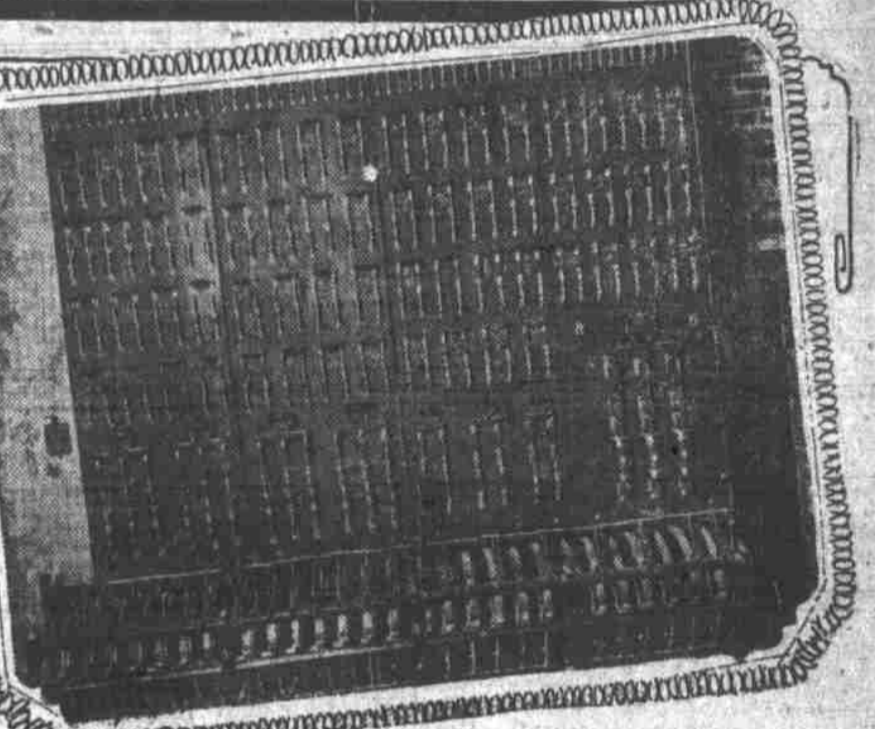


# PORTLAND HAS FINEST OF WESTERN PLAYHOUSES



New Hellig theatre at the corner of Seventh and Taylor.



View of interior of theatre taken from stage. Huge switchboard where the lighting of the theatre is regulated.

**W**HEN the new Hellig theatre opens its doors to the public tomorrow evening, Portland audiences will for the first time in many years know what it is to enjoy a high class theatrical road offering in a theatre at once safe, attractive and comfortable. The path of those who have followed the so-called high class drama in Portland has been a thorny one since the theatrical trust and the proprietors of the Marquam theatre parted company.

When the Marquam Grand was opened it was the finest theatre in the northwest. The Columbia, which followed it as the home of the best road attractions, was a pretty house, but scarcely safe or comfortable. The Bunsen was worse. Theatre going in consequence has become almost a lost art in Portland.

**Comfort Is Keynote.**

There is no reason why it should not be revived, however, with the opening of the Hellig. It is absolutely fireproof, it is large and comfortable and it is comfortable. When Calvin Hellig secured about \$225,000 with which to put up a new theatre here two alternatives were open to him. He had to erect a fireproof building, that being provided for by law. He could either build a rather gaudy affair, putting his money into decorations, or he could employ every modern device, make the theatre comfortable and leave the matter of ultra elaborate decoration and luxury to take care of itself. In other words, the theatre could be considered as the frame to the stage picture it enclosed, to be simple and in good taste, but not so decorative as to distract attention from the canvas. He wisely chose the latter.

**Lobby Arrangement.**

Main entrance to the theatre is on Seventh street. On the right hand side of the lobby as one goes in are public telephone booths, a recessed leather seat, and a door leading into the drug store, which will occupy the ground floor corner on Seventh and Taylor. On the right are the box office windows, where two men will sell tickets during the rush hours, thus avoiding any unnecessary delay. The lobby is finished in light gray marble, and entrance from the sidewalk is by means of heavy copper doors. Covering the walk on both the Seventh and on the Taylor street fronts is a broad marquee of copper and glass, extending one foot over the line of the street curb, thus giving the benefits of a porte cochere and obviating any chance of inclement weather ruining someone's clothes en route to the theatre. This arrangement makes it possible to leave one's home, if driving, go to the theatre and return without being away from the protection of a roof. It also affords protection to those wishing to take the air between acts.

**In the Foyer.**

Going from the lobby to the foyer, which is separated from it by heavy mahogany doors, one finds himself in an attractive and fairly good sized reception room, finished in mahogany and gray marble. Over the foyer is a dome of leaded art glass, from which soft lights will illuminate the room. On the left of the foyer are marble stairs leading to the women's room below, two handsome marble busts on pedestals guarding the entrance to the stairway.

The women's room is large and extremely pretty. Two maids are in attendance, one at the head of the stairs and another in the room itself. The furniture of the room is in French gray and gilt, and the decorations in French gray and old rose. Here women will find mirrors, telephones, writing desks with note paper and pen and ink, a maid to check hats and coats and every convenience that they could desire.

**Checking Arrangements.**

Beyond the stairway to the women's room and farther to the left of the main foyer is the checking room and counter for the use of both men and women, and in which check boys will be in attendance during all performances.

On either side of the foyer in the passage ways leading to the main auditorium of the theatre are marble drinking fountains. Other fountains of similar design are located on the first balcony, and on the passage ways leading from the orchestra floor to the balconies, as well as on the second balcony.

**Manager's Office.**

Below the two box offices, on the mezzanine floor, is the office of William T. Fangle, manager of the theatre, so located as to give him easy access to the box office and the main auditorium and at the same time allowing him freedom from ordinary interruption. A unique feature of the lounge room for managers is the outlook into the auditorium, giving them opportunity to see the stage whenever they wish without the necessity of leaving the room.

Further to the right of the foyer is a room for the ushers, where they can change their clothes and have individual lockers. This room is typical of the attention given to the comfort of employees as well as the public by Mr.

**Hellig in the designing of the theatre.**

A broad passageway leading from the right of the foyer ends in the men's smoking room, an apartment 16 by 56 feet, finished in old Flemish furniture, with easy upholstered chairs and benches and lighted by black wrought-iron lanterns. At one end is a large "round robin" upholstered in leather, with cigar and cigarette counter, where it will be possible to secure smokers' supplies without leaving the building. Another feature of this room is an information board where announcements of various kinds will be posted and news bulletins will be kept up to the minute.

**Inclined Passageway.**

An inclined passageway—no steps are used in the house—excepting in fire-escapes and on the stairs leading to the second gallery—leads from the foyer to the mezzanine floor where are the women's tea room and the vestaria garden. The tea room and garden are attractively furnished and are designed to give entertainment and comfort to both men and women before the opening of the play and between the acts.

The tea room will be lighted by electric lamps hidden behind amber glass windows, giving the effect of sunlight streaming in from the out-of-doors. The vestaria garden will add to the attractive impression and will be furnished with wicker tea tables and chairs. Tea will be served here and light luncheons and ice creams may be procured, although the primary purpose of the room is as a meeting place and drawing room. The theatre's orchestra of 12 pieces will play in the tea room from 7:30 to 8:30 each evening.

**The Main Auditorium.**

The main auditorium of the theatre is separated from the foyer by a low partition of marble and mahogany, topped by brown velvet portiers. On each side of the auditorium are 11 boxes, arranged at varying heights so as not to interfere in any manner with the view of those sitting either in the orchestra chairs or in other boxes. At the same time the boxes are so arranged as to give an exceptionally good view of the stage.

The lower tier consists of four boxes on each side. Above these, but somewhat lower than the first balcony, are four more, while above these are three upper balcony boxes. The highest box in the upper balcony tier is 14 feet lower than the gallery. In the upper boxes there are but three chairs, in the lower tiers six chairs, and four chairs. The six chair boxes have four wicker arm chairs, a gilt arm chair and one straight-backed chair. The furniture is comfortable and in good taste.

**Arrangement of Boxes.**

A feature of the boxes that is especially attractive is that each has its own ante-room, provided with clothes and hat racks and with a large mirror. The door leading from the passageway to the ante-room may be locked when the occupants of the boxes are within, thus precluding danger of theft. Separating the boxes from the ante-rooms are old-gold portiers.

The walls of the boxes are colored old rose and the upholstery and furnishings are a combination of old rose and old gold. In the center of both lower and upper balconies are loges, sunk one and a half feet below the level of the surrounding seats so as not to interfere in any manner with the view of those in the balconies. Either or both of these loges may be used for spot lights or as boxes.

The entire theatre seats 2265, which gives it, by several hundred, the largest seating capacity of any house in the west. The lower floor has comparatively few seats. The lower balcony is

**Dressing room for player folk on right of stage.**

very large, seating 800, which is more than many of the new New York theatres, such as Maxine Elliott's and Nazimova's, seat in the entire house.

**Chairs Are Roomy.**

All of the chairs throughout the main floor and the lower balcony are solid leather opera chairs of the latest and most comfortable pattern. The smallest chair is 19 inches broad and the widest 22 inches. The space between the rows of chairs is especially broad and permits of easy passage without the necessity of everybody getting up while the late ones come in to take their inside seats.

**The color scheme of the interior is French gray and gold, touched here and there with old rose. The walls are gray and the lighting arrangements are old gold. There will be no lights that are not shielded and softened by complete glass coverings.**

On either side of the proscenium arch are two immense gilt torches, topped by glass lighters giving a flame effect. Above the proscenium arch is a fresco in French gray and blue showing the old Oregon—a mountain in the distance, huge firs in the foreground, the only life being the view of a wagon train toiling up a hillside on the left foreground.

**The Frieze Design.**

Extending back on either side wall is a continuation of the artist's idea in the form of a frieze, showing fir trees and a mountainous sky line in the same color scheme. This ceiling is a dark bluish-gray and is picked out in tiny twinkling lights that will give the effect of stars. The entire scene is intended to convey the impression of moonlight and the execution is unusually good and free from garishness.

In contrast to the Old Oregon of the fresco and frieze the asbestos curtain is a picture of the New Oregon—looking across the Lewis and Clark fair grounds by moonlight, the lake and bridge in the center, with the government building in the background. The painting is in quiet colors of blue and gray.

The plush curtain which also will be used is of old gold draped plush, with a letter "H" in one corner and will part in the center folding away to either side.

**Broad Balcony.**

The balcony is unusually broad and the lip extends out far beyond the gallery line. There are nine rows in the balcony entirely clear of the gallery. The second balcony is so arranged that there is no seat in it from which the orchestra cannot plainly be seen—an almost unrivaled feature of this house.

The first two rows of the upper balcony are equipped with comfortable opera chairs of the same type as those of the lower balcony and main floor. When desirable, a large part of the gallery can be closed off from the theatre, reducing the size of the auditorium and increasing the acoustic effect. The second balcony is reached by a concrete stairway from the Taylor street side of the building. Seats for it will be sold at the main box offices until 8:30 in the evening, after which the box office in the gallery will be opened. Another feature of the gallery is that a cigar stand will be maintained in the smoking room on the gallery floor, where tobacco, cigars and cigarettes will be sold, making it unnecessary to climb the stairs between acts unless so desired. The smoking room for the gallery is large and will be comfortably equipped with seats and benches, and with every toilet convenience. Another unique feature is the comfortable dressing rooms provided for women patrons. There are four enclosed exits from

the gallery, making it possible to empty it in remarkably short time.

The arrangements for the comfort and convenience of employees and the very important part of the theatre behind the scenes that the public seldom sees, are astonishingly good. The orchestra pit is 20 feet long by 12 feet wide, and will accommodate 44 men—enough for the largest grand opera organization. On either side of the pit are false floors upon which chairs can be placed in case of an overflow audience. Steps from the pit beneath the stage lead to the orchestra players' smoking room of unusual size and convenience.

**The stage entrance is on the Taylor street side and is protected by heavy copper doors, which like all the other doors in the theatre, open and close automatically. A huge slide way from the walk to the store room provides for the easy handling of scenery and property carried by traveling companies. An electric hoist facilitates the handling of trunks and property.**

**Largest Stage in West.**

The stage itself is the largest west of Chicago. It is 100 feet from wall to wall and 70 feet between girders. It is 70 feet high. From the curtain line to the back wall is 35 feet. The proscenium opening is 35 feet broad and 22 feet high. Above is a wrought iron gridiron and the arrangements of the scenery lofts and ropes is the most modern of any theatre in the country.

**To the right of the stage is the large property room, while a spiral staircase leads to the second and third floors, where are the men's chorus dressing room and the women's chorus dressing room, each 10 by 12 feet, equipped with mirrors, hot and cold water and every convenience. In most theatres the chorus has to dress where it can, usually sitting on a trunk.**

Above the chorus dressing rooms are the fly gallery and pin rail, both with every convenience for scenery handling.

**Stars' Dressing Rooms.**

On the left of the stage are the 12

stars' dressing rooms. Each room has hot and cold water, the two lower floor rooms being especially complete and convenient with sanitary arrangements, full length mirrors, large clothes closets and dressing tables. An unusual feature of the stars' rooms is the white enamel make-up table, topped with a mirror 36 by 40 inches and lighted by three-colored lights, so that the stars can make up for any combination of lights with comparative ease. These three-colored light dressing tables are occasionally carried by leading stars, but no other theatre in the country is equipped with them.

The heating and ventilating arrangements, operated from beneath the stage, are remarkable. Through them the entire air of the theatre can be changed every six minutes. On either side of the stage are huge rotary fans, one drawing fresh air from out of doors through steam pipes heated by a plant below the pavement of Taylor street, the fan distributing the warm fresh air to the entire theatre through white enameled iron gratings that may be seen here and there in the walls of the house.

**No Noise From Fans.**

The fan on the right hand side of the theatre draws the impure air from a point near the orchestra pit and shoots it out of doors. Both fans are operated by electricity and are noiseless. In warm weather ice will be placed in the fresh air pipes and the temperature of the house will be lowered 10 degrees from that out of doors.

All of the lights in the house are operated from an enormous switchboard to the right of the stage and curtain.

The theatre contains private suites for the use of Mr. Hellig, these rooms being located to the rear of the lower balcony, and being complete with offices, bedrooms, sitting rooms and baths, even including a private box



Calvin S. Hellig, president of the Northwest Amusement company.

from which Mr. Hellig can view the stage without leaving his apartments.

**Enclosed Fire Escapes.**

One of the many unique features of the house is that it has no outside fire escapes excepting those leading from the dressing rooms in the rear of the stage. On the Taylor street side—the left side of the theatre—are complete enclosed stairs, separated from the main theatre by fire walls. The stairs are of solid concrete. Leading from the lower balcony is a broad promenade, surrounded by an ornamental grill and railing and decorated with flower boxes, which provides an exit from the balconies and also serves as a pleasant out-of-doors promenade from the balconies between acts. This extends the entire length of the theatre to the stage line.

On the right hand side of the theatre is what might be termed the "fire escape tower." It is an enclosed concrete stairway, separated by firewall, and so constructed that even in a panic there could be no danger of anyone falling or the necessity of crowding. This stairway runs from the upper balcony to the ground and furnishes an easy exit for every floor. From the upper balcony there are four stairways, two outer ones and two leading to the lower balcony and main floor.

**No Fire Danger.**

Marc Kiaw, who went through the theatre the other day, was particularly impressed by these enclosed fire escapes and said he considered them the best thing of their kind he had ever seen in theatre construction.

All the outer doors are of copper and can be thrown open instantly. The window and door casements are of steel. There is nothing about the theatre to burn. Behind the stage every-

thing is protected by the automatic sprinkler system and most of the scenery is fireproof. The asbestos curtains works automatically in heavy iron pipe grooves, so that it would be impossible for a sudden fire to prevent its falling. Ventilators have been arranged in the rear of the theatre behind the stage so as to carry upward any fire that might blaze in scenery or flies.

The Hellig is undoubtedly the safest and most comfortable theatre in the west, as well as the largest. In every detail its arrangements should make theatre-going in Portland a pleasure and a benefit.

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