



HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

LOOKING BACK 1921–1988

The State Theatre, which seats 2,181, opened in 1921 and was then considered the most technologically advanced and elaborate theatre in the United States. One Minneapolis newspaper columnist described it as “a gilded pleasure palace, dedicated to the Hollywood dreams that captured America’s heart in the roaring ‘20s.” It was designed by Chicago architect J.E.O. Pridmore in a free Italian Renaissance style and boasted the first well-driven air conditioning system in Minneapolis. The original stage floor was glass, which allowed direct lighting from beneath. The opening night program included a silent film, newsreel and travelogue. A Wurlitzer pipe organ was installed in 1925 and concerts were held every day for 25 cents. The State’s neon marquee was installed in the ‘40s and runs the entire width of the theatre. Between 1921 and 1978, the State Theatre was used primarily as a movie house, but also hosted vaudeville acts including Nora Bayes and Victor Herbert, concerts and ballet. The movie screen was the largest one west of the Mississippi River at the time and designed so every person had a perfect view of the stage. *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* set a national record here in 1970 for the longest run in America (34 weeks). In 1978, the theatre was purchased by the Jesus People Church as a place of worship. They covered all the murals and sculpted figures with drapes and plaster shields, which were later removed.

RENOVATION 1989–PRESENT

The Minneapolis Community Development Agency purchased the LaSalle Plaza block in 1989 including the State as part of the LaSalle Plaza development. After nearly two years of renovation at a cost of \$8.8 million, the State Theatre re-opened in November of 1991 with the Minnesota Opera’s production of *Carousel*. The restored proscenium spans almost the full width of the building and curves 100 feet above the stage. The six chandeliers in the house are original, as are the murals on the wall. Since the re-opening in 1991, the State has hosted live Broadway touring productions, concerts including Patti Smith and Gordon Lightfoot, the National Geographic Live! and Literary Legends Speakers Series and films including the world premiere of the Minnesota-based film, *Grumpy Old Men*. Hennepin Theatre Trust is now the owner and operator of this magnificent structure.



Photo: Minneapolis Public Library

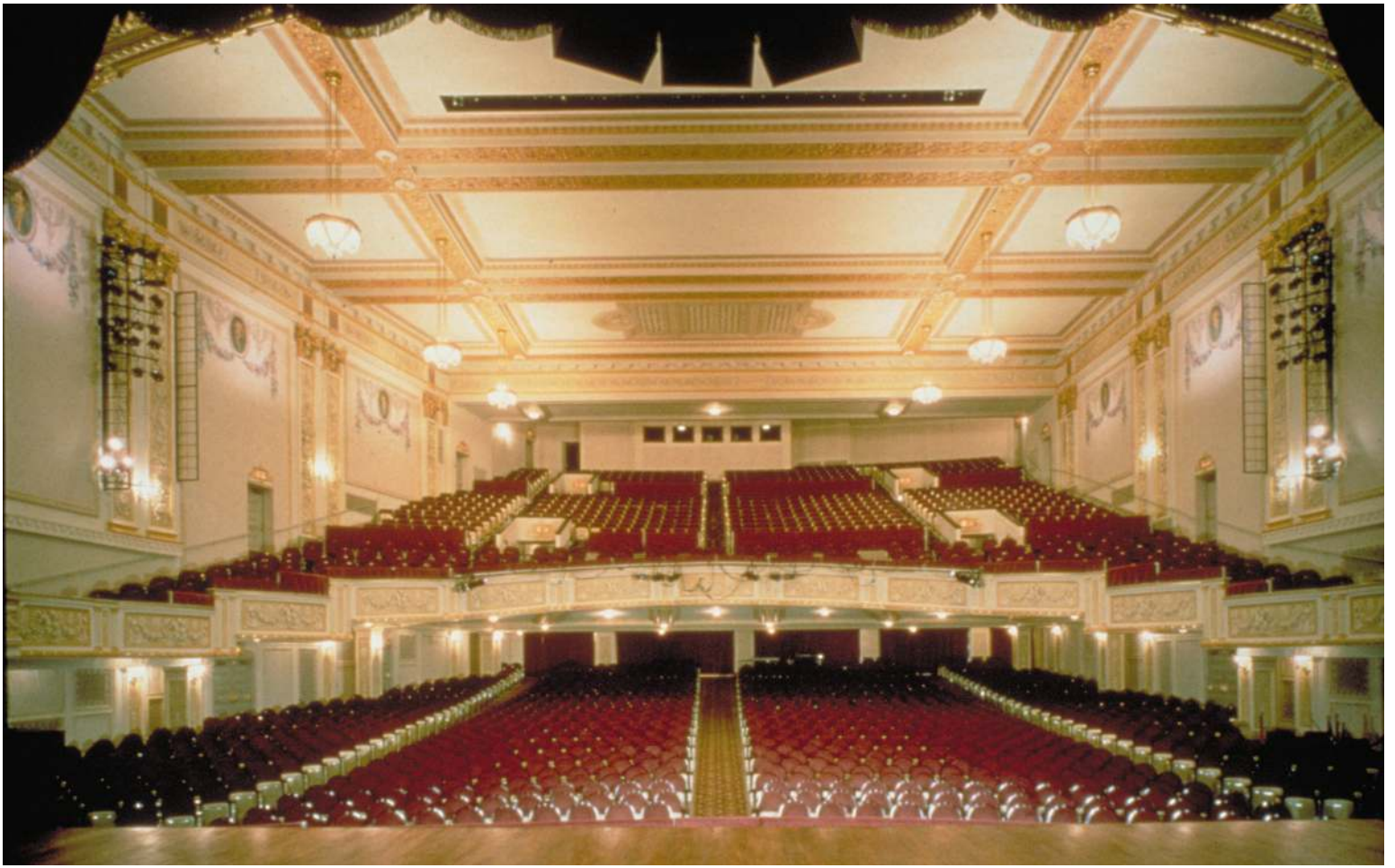
EVERYONE HAS A THEATRE STORY. TELL US YOURS!

If you, or someone you know, has an interesting story or experience connected to the State, Orpheum, Pantages or Century Theatre, we would love to capture it for our archives. Please e-mail us at info@hennepintheatretrust.org.



Hennepin Theatre Trust, owner of the historic Orpheum, State, Pantages and New Century Theatres, is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to arts-inspired community cultural development.
State Theatre • 805 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis • www.HennepinTheatreTrust.org • 612.455.9500





TOUR ALL OF THE TRUST'S THEATRES – TOURS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

Take a walking tour of Hennepin Theatre Trust's State, Orpheum and Pantages Theatres! Experienced guides highlight architecture and historical facts and stories about the venues that anchored the region's "Theatre Row." Hour long tours are offered twice a month and begin at the State Theatre Box Office. Tickets are \$5 per person. Group tours are also available but must be arranged in advance. Discounted rates are available for educational organizations. For more information on these tours, please visit our website at www.hennepintheatretrust.org.



YOU CAN JOIN US IN PRESERVING OUR HISTORY!

Please join Hennepin Theatre Trust in preserving and maintaining these three magnificent theatres to keep them open, active and accessible! To find out how you can support this work, please contact Individual Giving Coordinator Kathryn Tjaden at kathryn.tjaden@hennepintheatretrust.org or 612.455.9516.