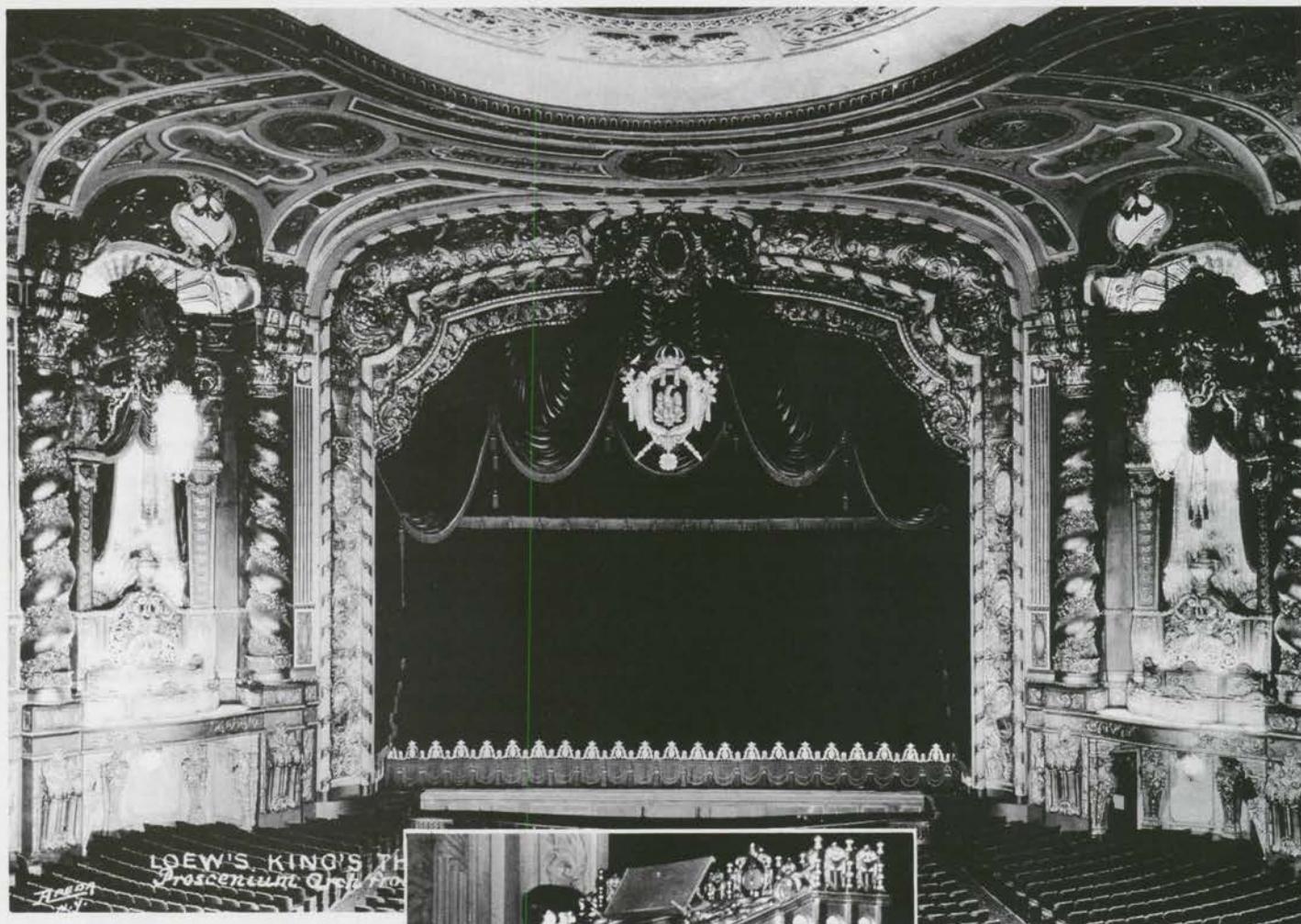


"An Acre of Seats in a Palace of Splendor"



LOEW'S KINGS THEATRE

The Loew's "Wonder Theatre" project involved the almost-simultaneous raising of five impressive houses — one in every Borough save Richmond, plus Jersey City in the trans-Hudson — to designs from the three leading purveyors: two each from Eberson and the Rapps and one Lamb. Along with the San Francisco Fox,

they represent the last great effusion of the "classic" movie palace before the short epoch of Art Deco and the subsequent end of big theatre construction. The exquisite Kings in far Brooklyn, would have been a standout anywhere. Passing under a "French Curve" marquee, one traversed a lofty, columned, outer lobby then angled into a wood-panelled inner lobby, lower but nearly as long. Like those in the S.F. Fox, the lighting fixtures here and in the auditorium coyly anticipated the coming of Deco without insulting the otherwise traditional trappings. Lounge suites off the inner lobby and on the mezzanine were handsomely fitted out. More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the 3676 seats were on the main floor: the balcony, never deeper than eleven rows, was more like a horseshoe loge. High draped niches, the largest six backed by huge paintings, surrounded the auditorium beneath a flattish coffered ceiling and two-tiered dome. Low arcades flanked the seating on both orchestra and balcony levels. Reds, tans and golds dominated the sumptuous Rambusch decorative scheme.

Having developed a good and loyal customer in Loew's, Robert-Morton appropriately built their last large organs for the Wonder Theatres: identical 4/23s. Good organs, but too late to matter: by the time the Kings opened, the plant had been shut down for months. With little in its way, and minimal balcony overhang, the Kings organ permeated every corner of the house and substantial surrounding territory. Those who recall this organ, your editor included, regard it as one of the most successful anywhere. Unusually well preserved during its career, the Kings has been closed a decade, but still stands. Its present owner, the City of New York, is said to be seeking ways to reactivate it. The organ, removed in the mid-70s, has, like too many others, gone to the four winds. Of the five organs, only Loew's 175th St. remains en situ. A nice color picture of the Kings console can be found as the frontispiece of *Junchen Vol. II*. *Steve Levin*

For membership information write: THEATRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA • 2215 West North Avenue, Chicago, IL 60647



Brooklyn

Architect: Rapp & Rapp
Opened: September 7, 1929
Organ: Robert-Morton 4/23