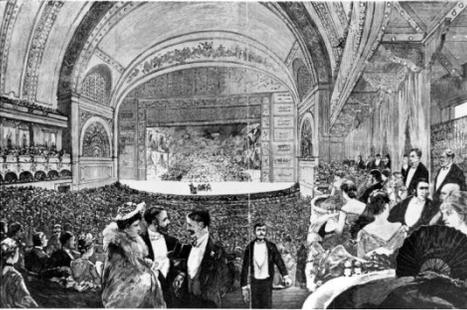


AUDITORIUM THEATRE

CHICAGO'S LANDMARK STAGE® EST. 1889

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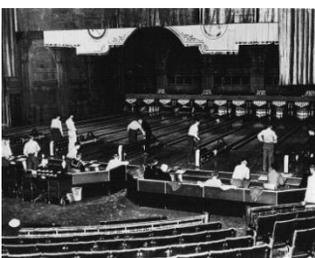
The Auditorium Theatre officially opened on December 9, 1889. Designed by **Louis Sullivan** and **Dankmar Adler** at the behest of Chicago businessman **Ferdinand Wythe Peck**, the theatre was immediately hailed as one of the most beautiful venues in the world, with its gilded elegance and graceful design. Today, it remains **one of the most important performance venues** in the world, hosting hundreds of events each year.

Chicago in the late 1800s was a leading center for political idealism and labor activism. One violent and fatal demonstration for the eight-hour work day at an open market near Des Plaines Ave. and Randolph St. occurred on May 4, 1886. This incident, which became known as the Haymarket Riot, **further inspired Ferdinand Peck to create a venue that embodied the democratic ideals that he believed could bring art to all of the people in Chicago.** Peck charged the renowned architects with creating a **distinctly American design** for the theatre, differing from European opera house models in that the **best seats were available to the average Chicagoan, not the elite.**

In 1889, the theatre was deemed **a marvel of cutting-edge technology**, featuring the prominent display of an astounding **3,500 light bulbs** (only publicly seen for the first time in 1879), **unrivaled acoustics, air conditioning** (which called for the delivery of 15 tons of ice daily), **26 hydraulic lifts** that could easily raise and lower sections of the stage, and an expansive **95-foot loft** above the stage.



When the theatre opened, Chicago was in fierce competition with many cities in a bid to host the 1893 World's Fair. Many notable figures of the day, including **President Benjamin Harrison**, attended the opening night performance at the theatre and were impressed by its perfect acoustics, beautiful architecture, and incredible sightlines. The attention that the theatre attracted helped convince the US Congress that Chicago was ready to **host an event as important as the 1893 World's Fair.**



During its early decades, the Auditorium stage was the venue of choice for leading entertainers of the era, including **John Philip Sousa, Sarah Bernhardt, and the Ziegfeld Follies**, as well as political figures including **Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Booker T. Washington.**

The theatre was also the home to the **Chicago Symphony Orchestra** and the **Chicago Grand Opera Company**, and even hosted **indoor baseball games**.

During World War II, the theatre became a **Servicemen's Center** (complete with a bowling alley!) for traveling soldiers. More than **2.2 million servicemen** were housed, fed, and entertained between 1941 and 1945 at the theatre and its adjacent hotel complex.

After the war, the theatre closed down entirely. During the 1960s, a woman named **Beatrice Spachner** led a successful fundraising campaign that raised the necessary money to renovate and restore the theatre. Architect **Harry Weese** oversaw the refurbishment of the theatre, and the **Auditorium Theatre officially reopened Oct. 31, 1967** with a gala performance of **New York City Ballet's** production of George Balanchine's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.



Beginning in the late 1960s, a host of rock and pop performers took to the stage, including **Jimi Hendrix, The Who, Janis Joplin, Bruce Springsteen, Prince, Aretha Franklin, and David Bowie**, among others. The Auditorium earned a reputation as Chicago's home for the musical superstars of the day. **Elton John** was quoted saying he knew that he "truly made it" when he stepped onto the Auditorium's stage. The theatre is still a stop for many of today's high-profile music acts – within the last few years, **David Gilmour, Neil Young, David Byrne, and Mavis Staples** have all played the Auditorium.

In 1975, the US Department of the Interior declared the Auditorium Theatre a **National Historic Landmark**.

The theatre has also hosted some of the world's premier dance companies – many of which continue to perform here today – including **The Joffrey Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Bolshoi Ballet, and American Ballet Theatre**. Broadway musicals also found appreciative audiences at the Auditorium Theatre, with engagements of ***The Phantom of the Opera, Les Misérables, Miss Saigon, Show Boat, Hello Dolly!, The Color Purple, Sister Act***, and many more taking place at the theatre.

In the spring of 2015 and 2016, the theatre hosted the **first three rounds of the NFL Draft**, marking the first time the draft was held outside of New York in over 50 years. Over 7 million home viewers had the chance to see inside the beautiful theatre during the televised event.

To this day, the staff and Board of the Auditorium Theatre continue to lovingly preserve and restore Adler and Sullivan's masterpiece. Typically, more than 250 performances and events attract **more than a quarter of a million people every year** to Chicago's landmark theatre, making it a true staple in Chicago and the rest of the world.

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