

State Theatre

1921, 1978, 1991

The State Theatre was designed by J.E.O. Pridmore in an Italian Renaissance style with white glazed terracotta ornamentation and built at a cost of one million dollars. The Theatre opened on February 5, 1921, with a silent film, newsreel, and travelogue. At the time, it was considered the most technologically advanced and elaborate theatre in the United States. When opened, it was a vaudeville/silent movie house.



The original stage floor was glass and lit from below. The State was cooled by the first well-driven air-conditioning system in Minneapolis and kept at a temperature of 72 degrees. The *Minneapolis Star* reported on June 17, 1922, that perfume was added to the cooling system to detract from the dampness reported by patrons.

During the 1920s, the State Theatre was a venue for fashion shows by various stores including Powers and Dayton's.

A Wurlitzer organ was subsequently installed, with its first concert on January 24, 1925. Eddie Dunstedter played and subsequently issued

recordings for patrons to purchase. Concerts were held daily.



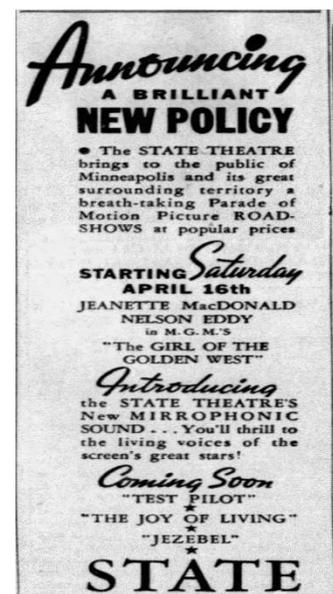
Minneapolis Journal, October 19, 1921

From 1925 to 1958, though it offered organ concerts and style shows, the State was primarily a movie house. It boasted the largest movie screen west of the Mississippi River. Favorite movie actors would appear in person, including Tom Mix shown in front of the State Theatre in 1929.



Hennepin County Library

The stage floor could also be modified within a few hours to accommodate any type of performance – films, vaudeville acts, concerts, ballets, and Broadway touring productions.



In the 1930s, talking pictures were introduced at the State. The *Star Tribune* ad of April 10, 1938, advertised Mirrophonic Sound, featuring the thrill of hearing “living voices.”

The Minneapolis Star, on June 7, 1942, provided a history of the State’s marquee. The original marquee was built in 1921 but destroyed in 1929, replaced by a marquee with electric bulbs and large letters reading STATE. That marquee stood for thirteen years. In 1942, a new V-shaped canopy was constructed with STATE spelled out on both sides.



Hennepin County Library

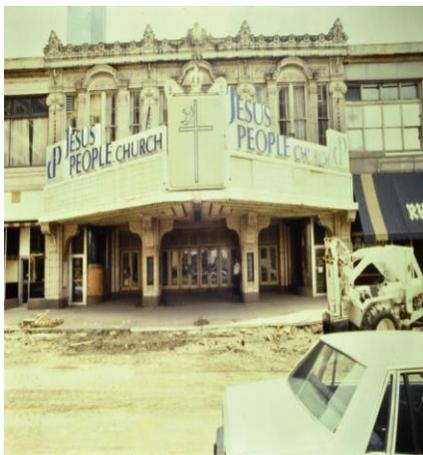
The *Star Tribune* reported on August 5, 1954, that the State would introduce Cinemascope showing *Seven Bridges for Seven Brothers*. Movies continued to be shown until 1975. The last movie was *Tommy* on December 31, 1975.

In the 1970s, live music was performed at the State Theatre including Joe Cocker, Billy Joel, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, as well as many other artists.



Hennepin County Library

From 1978 to 1989, the building was the home of Jesus People Church. The historic exterior was removed, and church signage was installed. The Jesus People Church in Minneapolis began in 1972, after a series of revival meetings held at Souls Harbor, in Downtown Minneapolis in the fall of 1971. The murals and sculpted figures were covered by drapes and plaster shields.



Hennepin County Library

In 1989, the Minneapolis Community Development Agency purchased the State. After three years of renovation at a cost of \$8.8 million, the State reopened in November of 1991 with the Minnesota Opera’s production of *Carousel*.

The restored proscenium spans the width of the building and curves one-hundred feet above the stage. The six chandeliers are original as are the wall murals. The foyer and lobby areas have retained their original black and white marble floors, molded plaster coffered ceilings, crystal chandeliers and wrought iron railings. Monumental Corinthian pilasters, embroidered gold draperies, and crystal

chandeliers suspended from a coffered ceiling are a combination of design characteristics from the Renaissance, Moorish, and Byzantine modes.

The State seats 1,300 on the main floor, with an additional 850 seats in the balcony. Since the renovation, the State has hosted live Broadway touring productions, concerts, speaker series and the world premiere of *Grumpy Old Men*.

The Hennepin Theatre Trust has been the owner and operator since 2005.



Hennepin County Library