

History

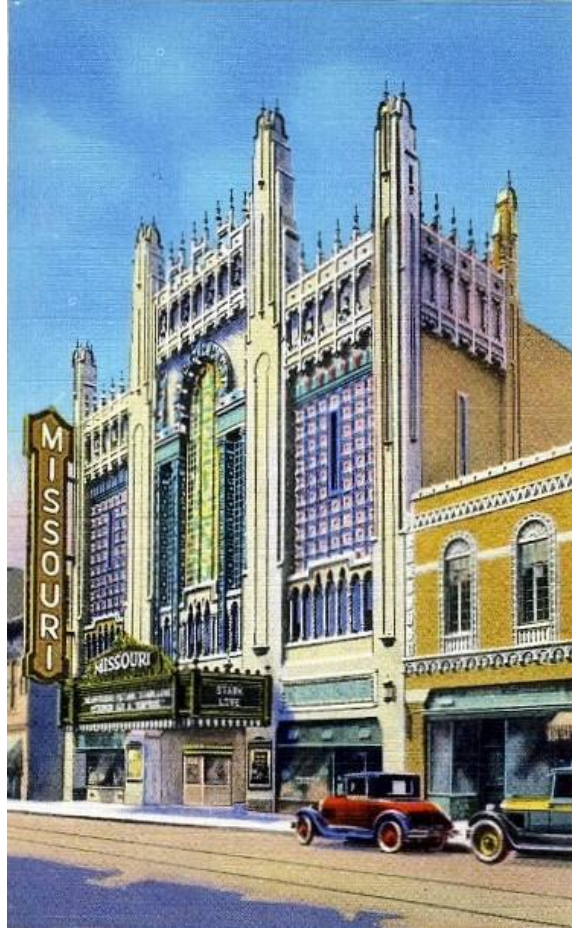


An audience enjoys a live performance inside the stunning Missouri Theater as audiences have done for decades.

"The time was 6:30 p.m., June 25, 1927. St. Joseph, Missouri citizens-factory workers, packing plant employees, professionals-arrived in Model T Fords, Stanley Steamers, Pierce Arrows or hurried on foot up the sidewalk to the seventh block of Edmond Street for the gala opening of the city's \$1 million, 1,200-seat "Movie Palace." The air was electric with excitement..."

The Missouri Theater opened June 25, 1927 with Rough House Rosie as the feature. Waylande Gregory designed and created all the sculptural work in the theater in 1926 and 1927.

After paying their 25 cents admission, guests were astounded at the theater's intricate beauty. The silent film showing that evening must have paled in comparison to the theater's plush seats, ornate chandelier and exquisite plaster work. Though silent films are long past for the theater, this sense of awe returns each time a local theater group, national performer or arts program takes its stage.



The 1927 Missouri Theater depicted in a vintage print.

Designed by Boller Brothers, the Missouri Theater's unique structure was added to the national Register of Historic Places in 1979. While movie palaces across the country were being torn down to make room for contemporary structures, the citizens of St. Joseph refused to allow destruction of one of the country's few examples of Hollywood-Oriental style.

In 2027, the St. Joseph community will mark the 100th year of the Missouri Theater with a variety of events and a trip to view area works by Waylande Gregory.