

THE ROY AND NIUTA TITUS AUDITORIUM

The Roy and Niuta Titus Auditorium at The Museum of Modern Art, which opens to the public on June 9, 1977, has been redesigned to improve performance and appearance of the architectural spaces in which the Museum's film program is presented, to replace technical equipment, and to develop some new and special facilities, such as simultaneous translation system, important for the future.

The extensive renovation and endowment of the auditorium program were made possible by a \$1 million gift to the Museum from Mr. and Mrs. Titus, announced in October 1976.

An expanded projection room includes improved 35mm, 16mm and Super-8 projection machines with variable speeds for all sound and silent films; more efficient projection lamps; and better lenses. Architectural changes have been made to restore the integrity of the original auditorium design and to improve the acoustic characteristics and lighting. The interior has been completely refurbished with newly upholstered seats, new carpeting, a new screen, and a new curtain. The auditorium also offers a simultaneous translation system which will expand the Museum's ability to screen films from all countries.

The new projection screen is accompanied by three new theater-style loudspeakers, a new lectern with improved sound quality, and better communication with the projection room and controls for remote slide change by a lecturer.

The new projection room in addition to the new improved 35mm, 16mm and Super-8 projection machines has a sound and control system designed for the Museum's unique requirements including reproduction of both old and new sound tracks, and equipment for presentation in double-film "interlock" format of 35 and 16mm motion pictures.

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Each chair in the auditorium has an earset mechanism and sound level control, the listening end of an innovative simultaneous translation system in which a bilingual specialist will translate for English-speaking viewers, delivering spoken subtitles for those foreign sound films that do not have conventional subtitles printed in the picture area.

Comfortable, inexpensive earsets of good technical quality will be available for purchase at each simultaneous translation showing. The viewer will keep his and use it again. As a related feature, when foreign silent films are presented, with their original printed titles, the titles will be translated using the new facilities, but with the spoken word emerging from the normal movie speaker centered behind the screen.

Architectural objectives of the auditorium renovation were improvement of acoustic characteristics and lighting, provision of new facilities required by the Department of Film and restoration of the architectural integrity of the space which had diminished over the years, all with a sympathetic regard for the intentions of the original design. The architectural integrity of the original design, which had been compromised over the years by various partial remodelings and refurbishings, is being restored in the renovation by unifying the space through use of a few carefully selected materials and a coordinated color scheme.

Acoustic characteristics have been modified to improve intelligibility of film dialog, reduce the previously high inherent noise level and correct a tendency toward long-period reverberation at speech frequencies. Motorized light dimmers were added with a number of brightness preset and sequence timing options for the existing lighting system, which, combined with new step and aisle lights will improve visual comfort for all viewers as well as provide better illumination in walkways.

Seat row spacing has been increased in the three front sections of the auditorium to provide more leg room for approximately three-fourths of the

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audience.

The entire floor area on two levels, wainscot, stage, and standee rails have been covered in medium brown carpet, tying together the various structural elements of the base of the auditorium. Walls, coves and ceiling were painted a sand color which will complete the effect of a warm enclosure surrounding the audience. Existing chairs were refinished and reupholstered in a blue/grey fabric.

To provide improved separation between the auditorium and the adjacent lounge area, used increasingly for film-related exhibitions, a sound and light barrier wall has been erected outside the auditorium entrance doors. Persons who must arrive late or leave early will be able to do so without disturbing other members of the audience.

The remodeling of the auditorium was managed by Boyce Nemece Designs with Paul Buck/Robert Cane serving as architects, Flack & Kurtz as mechanical engineers, and Lewis S. Goodfriend & Associates as acoustical consultants.

The completed Roy and Niuta Titus Auditorium will be incorporated in the Museum's future expansion plans.

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