



WEILL CENTER HISTORY



The Sheboygan Theater was constructed in 1927-1928 for the Milwaukee Theatre Circuit of Universal Pictures Corporation at a cost of \$600,000. Designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style, it is an especially fine and intact example of the "atmospheric" type movie theater developed in the 1920s.



Laura LaPlante

February 18, 1928 – Grand opening for the Sheboygan Theatre featuring Laura LaPlante in the silent film “Finders Keepers.” The theater was an instantaneous success and immediately became Sheboygan’s premier motion picture and theatrical venue. [Click here for some classic throwback pictures.](#)

Over the years popular Hollywood and New York performers graced the stage of the theater, which included appearances by Abbot and Costello, the Marx Brothers, Duke Ellington, Guy Lombardo and Glen Miller.





Warner Brothers purchased the theater in 1930. In 1934, Manager Fred Reeths, Jr. claimed, "Here at your Warner's Sheboygan Theatre, you have the ultimate in entertainment...in recreation and pleasurable enjoyment...the complete relaxation from business and home worries. The Sheboygan Theatre was built to serve this entire community."

Warner Brothers operated the theater until 1966, when it was sold to Marcus Theaters Management Company. Marcus restored the theater's Mediterranean décor and removed the original outdoor ticket booth, replacing it with a walnut-paneled ticket desk in the lobby.



1980 – Marcus remodeled the theater's interior, abandoning the balcony and creating two new single-story theaters within the building. The twin theaters operated under the name Plaza 8 until closing in 1992.



October 7, 1996 - the Weill Center Foundation, Inc., a not-for-profit 501 (c)(3) corporation, was established and became the driving force in the preservation and restoration of the Sheboygan Theater.

A group of dedicated local volunteers began an ambitious 5 year restoration project, and solicited the help of nationally recognized restoration companies who provided the expertise to bring back to life Sheboygan's premier historic movie palace. The restoration project returned the theater back to its original 1928 appearance as accurately as possible while behind the scenes, the theater received all new electrical, HVAC, plumbing and beautiful new dressing rooms.

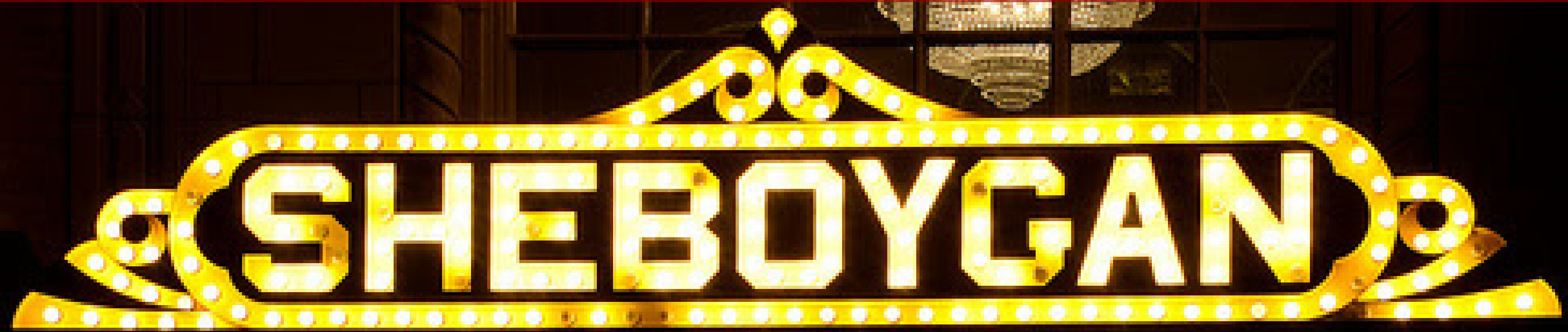


Inside the building, major activity was underway:

- Twin movie theater walls and seats were removed.
- Ceilings of the twin movie theaters were detached and removed from the 225 supporting cables. These cables were attached to the building's main roof beams through 225 holes cut in the star ceiling of the auditorium.
- The main floor was re-sloped to provide excellent sight lines for audiences.
- The balcony was re-stepped to allow more space between rows.
- The orchestra pit was expanded to the full width of the proscenium.
- All the original 1928 light fixtures, chandeliers and torches were discovered.
- New ticket office.
- Carpet replaced throughout.
- New restrooms and dressing rooms.

January 1999 - Board approves naming rights for theater, agreeing to Stefanie H. Weill Center for the Performing Arts as official name of facility.

December 22, 1999 - The property was placed on the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior, the State of Wisconsin Register of Historic Places by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, and the City of Sheboygan Historic Preservation Commission.




SHEBOYGAN



STEFANIE H. WEILL CENTER
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

The theater's second grand opening came in October 13, 2001 with a gala performance by the Sheboygan Symphony Orchestra.






2016 – The Weill Center celebrates its 15th Anniversary since the renovation in 2001. To view images of the restoration, [click here](#).



20TH
WEILL
CENTER
ANNIVERSARY

2021 – the Weill Center celebrates its 20th Anniversary since the renovation in October 2001 with a lineup like never before – Josh Turner, Postmodern Jukebox, Oak Ridge Boys, Spamilton and more!



Today – the theater is home to several local performing arts groups plus presents its own series of live performance and movies. The theater receives no public funding but relies solely upon the earned income and donations from generous corporations, foundations, families, and individuals, plus the efforts of an amazing group of over 100 dedicated volunteers.



Architects/Engineers/Designers involved in the restoration include:

- Erik Jensen, LJM Architects (deceased)
- Jennifer L. Lehrke, Legacy Architecture
- John Robbins, J. Robbins & Assoc. (deceased)
- Lynn Barber, Barber Engineering
- Don Cvetan, D&M Plumbing (retired)
- Wally Kummer, Site Foreman for D&M Plumbing (deceased)
- Dave Aldag, Aldag Honold Mechanical
- Dave Schulze, Muermann Engineering

Contractors/Subcontractors involved in the restoration include:

- Steve Schmitt, Jos. Schmitt & Sons
- Butch Theil, Site Foreman for Jos. Schmitt & Sons (retired)
- Dave Quasius, Quasius Construction (retired)
- Tom Bersch, Site Foreman for Quasius Construction (retired)
- Don Cvetan, D&M Plumbing (retired)
- Wally Kummer, Site Foreman for D&M Plumbing (deceased)
- Dave Aldag, Aldag Honold Mechanical
- Dennis Kampman, Site Foreman for Aldag Honold (retired)
- Gary Specht, Specht Electric (retired)
- Greg Van Helden, Site Foreman for Specht Electric
- Steve Woods, Quasius Construction (retired)

Original Building & Interior Design Committee members:

- Bob Peterson (deceased)
- Karl Grube (deceased)
- Don Zastrow
- Amy Molepske
- Barbara Roenitz Barrows
- Conrad Schmitt Studios