



History



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Historical Context

The Liberty Theatre in Hailey, Idaho was built in 1938. Historically it was a very simple, unadorned building with the barest minimum of art deco style, with a vertical neon sign and door hardware exhibiting a bit of deco influence. Its plain style reflected the period of its construction during the Great Depression, when movies would have been an extravagance for many people, and ostentatious decoration was minimized. In fact it appears that the Liberty Theatre was one of the few theaters built in the state during the 1930s.

Many more theaters were built in the 1920s, the decade of the “movie palace.” Theaters built in that decade are often more elaborate, utilizing exotic styles such as Spanish or Egyptian revival, which were sometimes influenced by the movies popular at the time of construction. When the Liberty was renovated in the 1990s, a more exaggerated art deco design was applied to the exterior of the building. The back-lit symmetrical tiered panels and corner decorations, and the full height fluted pilasters, are all part of the modern deco design.



Roxy Theater, Cascade, ID

One theater comparable to the Liberty is the Roxy Theater in Cascade, built in 1939. This theater is very similar in style to the original exterior of the Liberty. It is simple and modest, with the most prominent decoration being the marquee and vertical sign. It has octagonal windows like the Liberty did as well.



Nuart Theater, Moscow, ID



Nuart Theater, Blackfoot, ID



Blue Fox Theater, Grangeville, ID

Another theater, built in 1935, is the Nuart Theater in Moscow. It is also constructed of brick in the art deco style. Unlike the Liberty, however, it started out with more exuberant, if still restrained, decorative elements, such as contrasting, unpainted brick and its deco vertical sign, which it still retains.

The Nuart Theater in Blackfoot was constructed in 1929. It is in the moderne style, which is related to the art deco style. Like the other theaters here, it is of brick construction. Its exterior has more decorative elements, such as the terra cotta ornament adorning the cornice, and the decorative patterned brickwork. It may be a little more showy, but it is still recognizable as a small town theater.

Another common style used for 1920s theaters is the Spanish or mission revival style. This is exemplified by the Panida Theater, constructed in 1927 in Sandpoint, with its stucco façade, clay tile roof and arcade with balconettes. A second example of this style in Idaho is the Blue Fox Theater in Grangeville, built in 1929.

Finally, there is the most flamboyant style of all, the Egyptian revival, used in the Egyptian Theater, constructed in Boise in 1927. This style came into fashion after the discovery of King Tut's Tomb in 1922. Although not widely used, it was the perfect style for a theater, where the exotic elements could really spark imagination of the theater-goer.



Panida Theater, Sandpoint, ID



Egyptian Theater, Boise, ID

1900 – 1919

~1900s Original Liberty Theatre was built across the street from the current theatre

1917 Silent movies brought to Hailey, ID and shown at the Liberty Theatre

1940 – 1959

1940s The Liberty Theater established itself as a mainstay of downtown Hailey



1980 – 1999

1992 Company of Fools is formed in Richmond Virginia

1994 Bruce Willis and Demi Moore purchase the theater

1996 Company of Fools relocates from Virginia to reside at the Liberty

2019 – Beyond

2019 SVCA and Liberty Theatre embark on a reinvisioning of the existing space

1920 – 1939

1938 Present day Liberty Theatre was built on the site of an outdoor ice-skating rink by Jack Rutter

1960 – 1979

1971 Sun Valley Center for the Arts is formed

1973 Liberty Theatre is sold

2000 – 2019

2013 Company of Fools joins the Sun Valley Center for the Arts

2016 Bruce Willis and Demi Moore donate theater to the SVCA