

Struthers Library Theatre



The Grand Dame of theaters in Northwest Pennsylvania is the Struthers Library Theatre in downtown Warren. Built in 1883, it has operated continuously since then, making it the 18th oldest operating theater in the United States. It is located at 302 Third Avenue West, Warren.

It owes its existence to Thomas Struthers, an entrepreneur/philanthropist and founder of Struthers Wells Company. In 1882, at age 80, Struthers decided to give the town of Warren a new library. He therefore built for the community a building that had a theater on the first floor, library on the second and Masonic rooms on the third.

Struthers was a practical man. He included the theater and the rooms for the Masons so the building could generate income to support the library. He also specified that the building was to be managed by a board headed by the judge and six trustees. That arrangement is still followed today.

The theater was originally an opera house. It had an elaborate dress circle and graceful balcony, gas footlights and eight dressing rooms in two tiers on each side of the stage. For three decades Library hall hosted an impressive list of performers, including such greats as Otis Skinner, John Philip Sousa, Victor Herbert, Cecil B. DeMille, Kellar the Magician and Sir Harry Lauder.

As the years passed, the legitimate stage shows of the 19th century were replaced by vaudeville and motion pictures. Accordingly, in 1919 the board of trustees remodeled the theater extensively to accommodate the new technology of motion pictures. The opera house was gutted; a four-story addition to the back of the building was added to provide new dressing rooms.

The theater became primarily a movie house, operated by Warner Brothers until 1966 and by Blatt Brothers until 1980, when fashions changed again and the movie theater was saddled with declining revenues. The last movie show was screened Sept. 30, 1980. Only five people attended that performance.

Meanwhile, in 1916, a new public library was built and the original library room was left for storage and reference material.

The third floor of the building, designed for use by North Star Lodge #241, F. and A.M., became vacant when the Masons moved to a new location in 1913. Immediately after the last movie show, interested citizens expressed a desire to keep the theater open and in use for the performing arts.

The response from the community was phenomenal. While volunteers cleaned and made temporary repairs to the old facility, a variety of live performances were presented in the theater.

In Feb., 1982 the public was invited to join the "Friends of the Library Theatre" More than 1,000 people responded. A capital fund campaign was launched. It raised \$465,000 in only 14 weeks.

The theater was closed May 8, 1983 and reopened Oct. 15 of that same year with a beautiful new look and modern equipment. Volunteers contributed more than 6,000 hours of labor.

Contributions and bequests have been directed towards the theater ever since, including \$560,000 raised through a capital endowment drive in 1990. Bequests to the theater now provide annual income from trust funds totaling more than \$1 million.

The Library Theater seats 930 people with 534 in orchestra area, 312 in balcony and 84 in loge. There are two handicapped areas in the back of the orchestra seating. There is an orchestra pit big enough to accommodate 15-20 musicians. The stage measures 69 X 27 feet, with a proscenium opening 34 feet wide.

Perhaps its most unusual feature is in the mezzanine foyer, which includes a kidney-shaped opening looking down onto the main floor auditorium. Overhead are five chandeliers that formerly hung in the Palace Theatre in Cincinnati and were discovered in a warehouse. Volunteers painfully restored the fixtures. It is also known that they hung originally in the famous Erlanger Theatre in Philadelphia, now torn down.

The Wedgwood sconces on the mezzanine wall were installed in 1919. The beverage bar is from the original Busy Bee Restaurant in Warren, which was found in storage and refurbished.

The balcony walls and the ceiling are accented by a reproduction of the 1919 stencil patterns. The original design was discovered in near-perfect condition on the wall, underneath fabric that was installed by the movie operators.

The Tiffany-style ceiling chandelier formerly hung in the old Columbia Theatre in Warren, now the Knights of Columbus headquarters. The K. of C. donated the fixture to the Library theatre.

The library room, located off the mezzanine, is available for receptions, parties, dinners, and similar events either in association with the theatre or separately. The room was restored in 1984 to nearly its original 1883 condition, complete with bookracks, chandeliers, stained glass window tops, and fireplace. The library room will accommodate up to 125 people for a sit-down dinner, and up to 200 for a stand-up reception. It is sometimes convenient to utilize the adjacent mezzanine in conjunction with the library room to accommodate slightly larger groups. There are folding chairs and round folding tables available in the library room to seat 100 people.



- ***Location***

The Struthers Library Theatre is located in the downtown business district of Warren at 302 Third Avenue West, the corner of Liberty Street. Third Avenue is two blocks off Route 6 (Pennsylvania Avenue) and one block south of Route 62 (Fourth Avenue) where these highways pass through town. Most downtown stores are within two or three blocks of the theatre, and there are several restaurants with modestly priced menus within a block of the theatre. McDonald's is a little over three blocks and Wendy's and Pizza Hut about six blocks away on Route 6 east. Perkins (open 24 hours a day) is a mile west on Route 6. Holiday Inn and Super 8 Motel are across from Perkins. In North Warren about 6 miles north on Route 62 are Applebee's, Bob Evans, Burger King, and a coffee shop/café. Lowe's and a Hampton Inn are located in this plaza area, too.

Parking for theatre patrons is available on the streets and in several parking lots within a block or two of the theatre. Parking is free in the lots on evenings and weekends.

- ***Auditorium and Public Facilities***

The auditorium seats a total of 930 with 534 in the orchestra and 312 in the balcony and 84 in the loge. The handicapped areas at the back of the orchestra area may fit more. All seats are numbered and may be sold on a reserved seat or open seating basis.

Public restrooms are located on the mezzanine level in the theatre, and in the library room. There is a second ladies restroom and, for those unable to climb stairs, an additional restroom located on the main floor at the rear of the auditorium

- ***Heating and Air Conditioning***

The theatre is heated with steam heat. All occupied rooms in the building are heated, including the auditorium, lobby, mezzanine, restrooms, stage, dressing room, control booth, orchestra green room, and library room.

Air conditioning is available, but must be arranged in advance. There is an extra charge for use of the air conditioning. The library room is not air-conditioned.

- ***Ticket Sales and Publicity***

There is a box office (double window) in the lobby for the sale of tickets at performance time. However the lobby is not open to the public at other times, nor is the box office staffed by theatre personal at any time, so other arrangements must be made for pre-performance sales, if that is required.

There are two display cases at the front entrance to the theatre where posters and other advertising may be displayed.

- ***Dressing Rooms***

There are 7 dressing rooms in the backstage annex, directly behind the stage. One is a 10x12-foot room on the first floor, usually used by the lead performer. There is one on the second level (8x12 feet), 4 on the third level and one 12x16 foot room on the fourth floor. Each of these dressing rooms contains a sink with cold water, a clothes rack, dressing table and mirror, several chairs, and electrical outlets.

In addition to the rooms above, there is a green room in the basement that is sometimes used as a dressing room by larger companies. It has a makeup table with mirrors, clothes rack, chairs, and electrical outlets, but no sink.

A Clear Com wall biscuit is located at the first landing in the dressing room staircase. There is a paging system to all dressing rooms, the basement room and the hall just outside the upstage door. There is a live send from the front of stage as well as a paging mike at stage right. Each speaker has a volume control.

- ***Backstage Restrooms***

There are 4 restrooms backstage. One is in the onstage dressing room and another one opening off the backstage hall. There are two more on the second floor. They have cold water. There are no showers in the building.

- ***Orchestra Pit and Preparation Room***

The orchestra pit is in front of the stage and 36 inches below the auditorium floor level. It runs nearly the full width of the auditorium, but is narrow (6 1/2x45 feet) and has a 15 inch raised section running 3 1/3 feet from the stage right end of the pit. There are 24 electrical outlets on three circuits in the pit for stand lights and electrically powered or amplified instruments. The pit will accommodate 20 musicians comfortably, 24 to 30 in a pinch.

There is a curtained railing around the pit on the auditorium side, with an opening at the center so that the conductor may enter from the auditorium side if desired. There is also access from the green room in the basement. There is a set of stairs available to run from stage center over the pit to the auditorium. The pit is equipped with a Clear Com station so that the conductor may communicate with the stage manager.

The green room is a 14x19 foot enclosed room in the basement with direct access to the pit. There are 24 Manhasset type music stands available and 16 stand lights. Folding chairs are available as needed.

There is an upright piano and a Conn Electric Organ in the orchestra pit. The other piano available, on stage (up stage left in a piano garage), is a Steinway 9-foot Grand. Both instruments are maintained in good condition with climate control equipment, and frequent tuning.

- ***Costume Pressing Area***

There is a 14x14-foot area in the basement equipped for costume use. There is available an iron, ironing board, steamer, and several clothes racks. There is a washer and dryer across the room.

- ***Stage Area***

The stage is 69x27 feet, with a proscenium opening 34 feet wide. The last upstage batten (usually with a full stage black) is three feet from the upstage wall, providing a crossover, and the main curtain hangs about a foot behind the proscenium. Thus, the maximum playing depth of the stage is 23 feet. The legs (black velour) that define stage width provide a playing width of about 30 feet.

There is an additional 4 feet of playing area in front of the main curtain. The floor at the extreme front 24 inches of this space is a grillwork covering over the footlight trough. One can walk on it, but ladies in high-heeled shoes beware.

- ***Stage Floor***

The stage floor is a 1983-built Douglas fir edge-grained, tongue and groove surface painted gray. The floor is not waxed. The surface flooring is underlain by plywood over wooden floor joists.

- ***Wing Space and Scenery Storage***

Space for storage of scenery and set pieces is limited. Wing space at stage right with the legs in their normal full-stage position is 10x27 feet. The rigging lock rail and hand lines are stage right and room must be left for their operation. The door from the dressing room area enters at upstage right and people waiting to go on stage tend to accumulate here.

There is a stage manager table in the down stage area of this space. Available at the table location is a Clear Com station, dimmable light, work light switches, white and blue running lights, and the paging system.

Wing space at stage left is 14x27 feet and unobstructed except for the piano garage in the upstage left corner (6x9 feet) and storage of the cinema speaker tower. The top of the piano garage is available for storage (props, cases, etc). Down stage right is the caged ladder to the upper fly rail (a hemp system) that controls the borders

Directly behind the stage in the dressing room annex, there is a small scenery storage room. This 7x15 foot room also houses all of the theatre electrical service panels and the dimmer banks, so only about half of it is available. Access to this room is through a 5 foot wide by 16-foot high scenery doorway at up stage center. This doorway blocks the cross over space behind the last upstage drop and makes this exit impractical to use in the run of show unless another drop is in and the upstage drop is flied.

- ***Loading and Unloading***

A 5 foot wide by 16 foot high scenery door to the outside is upstage left next to the piano garage. This door provides primary access to the stage for loading and unloading of scenery and equipment from outside. This doorway is at street level (there is a 2 inch lip into the doorway).

Outside this door is a parking space large enough to accommodate a small truck or van (about 30 feet maximum length). This space will not accommodate a bus or large truck.

There is a theatre owned parking lot beyond this parking space, and parking is available on the street alongside the Theatre. Arrangements must be made in advance to use these spaces. Either will permit a truck or bus to be parked within 25 feet or so of the backstage loading door. There is no shore power.

- ***Rigging***

Height from the stage floor to gridiron is approximately 50 feet, with 48 feet being the maximum height to which scenery can be flown. Primary rigging is T-bar counterweight-rigging sets manufactured by Tiffin Studios, with 4 cable lines per set. Each set has a maximum rated capacity of 1000 pounds. The locking rail and control lines are located stage right at floor level. The hemp running lines were replaced in 1999 with synthetic running lines. There are 28 line sets total. Battens are 44 feet long, schedule 80, and 1½-inch diameter pipe.

In addition to the counterweight lines, there are 6 hemp sets operated from a fly gallery platform 30 feet above the stage floor, stage left. Each of these sets is rated at 300 pounds maximum load. These lines are used for the three borders, the small movie screen, an upstage storage, and one unused. The travel on these hemp lines is limited and only experienced fly persons are allowed to operate this system.

- ***Stage Curtains***

The basic stage curtains, used for framing the stage, are black velour. There are 4 sets of legs and borders, plus 2 full width drops and a traveler, plus the main curtain (which is orange flame). The black traveler doubles as one set of legs when open, and the main curtain serves as the first border when open. The normal trim height is 16 feet. The normal hanging plot is as follows.

	-3"	Foot Lights – under steel grate
	-1'	Thrust
	0'-0"	Plaster Line
1	0'-9"	Main Curtain - Guillotine
2	2'-0"	#1 Electric – 24 Circuits
3	3'-0"	Open
4	3'-9"	#1 Leg – Olio Traveler Black
5	4'-6"	Scope Movie Screen
H1	5'-0"	Black Border – Rope Line Stage Left
H2	5'-9"	Movie Screen – Dead Hung Stage Left
6	7'-0"	#2 Electric – 12 Circuits
7	7'-9"	#2 Black Legs

8	8'-3"	Open
9	8'-9"	Open
10	9'-3"	Full Stage Black
H3	9'-6"	Dead Rope Line Stage Left
11	10'-0"	Historic Drop – Vaudeville
12	10'-6"	Open
H4	11'-0"	Black Border – Rope Line Stage Left
13	12'-0"	#3 Electric – 12 Circuits
14	13'-0"	#3 Black Legs
15	13'-6"	Historic Drop – Street Scene
16	14'-3"	Open
17	15'-0"	Red Drop
18	15'-6"	Open
19	16'-0"	Open
H5	16'-6"	Black Border – Rope Line Stage Left
20	17'-6"	#4 Electric – Cyc Lights
21	18'-6"	#4 Black Legs
22	19'-0"	Breeze Point Drop (may be removed)
23	19'-9"	Open
24	20'-9"	Open
25	21'-6"	Open
26	22' 3"	Open
27	23'-0"	White Cyc
28	24'-0"	Full Stage Black
H6	25'-0"	Dead Rope Line Stage Left
	27'-0"	Upstage Wall

The borders are on a hemp and sand fly system. They can be trimmed but cannot be brought to stage level. The theatre does not like the historic drops moved do to their age and would appreciate plots designed around them. The Scope movie screen cannot be moved.

- ***Stage Lighting***

There are four on-stage electrics, mounted permanently on counter-weighted line sets 2, 6, 13, and 20. There are 24 circuits and the number one electric and 12 each on the other three. There are two floor pockets and two upstage wall boxes surrounding the playing area. There are also two floor pockets with edison receptacles, 110ac. The standard lighting plot is included.

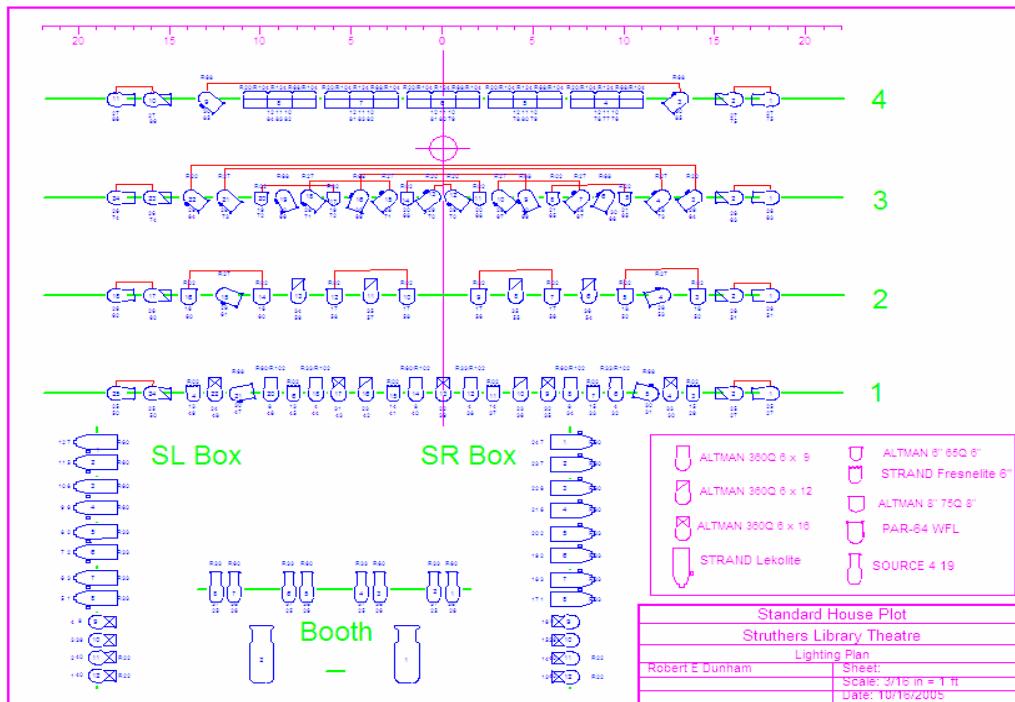
The dimmers are Strand Century CD80 dimmers. They are 2 dimmers per module at 2.4K each, with 96 dimmers available. Two modules have one dim and one non-dim circuit. The two non-dim circuits are set to the upstage wall, but they may be moved to any location. They are wired as a dimmer per circuit system with pigtailed on the four onstage battens and sockets on the two wall positions and the booth wall.

The following lighting installations are available: 16 each 8 x 13 Strand Century 1000 watt ellipsoids separately circuited mounted front of house on pipe stanchions

on the walls at each side of the balcony. 8 each ETC Source 4 19° 575 watt ellipsoids on two circuits mounted on the ceiling in front of the booth wall. 5 each Strand Century Iris Cyc Lights 3 x 500 watt mounted on the fourth electric. The following additional instruments are available and some are hung in the standard plot as described below.

6 each Strand Century 1000 watt 6 inch fresnels. 12 each Altman 500 watt 6 inch fresnels. 10 each 65Q 6 inch Altman 750 watt fresnels. 8 each 75Q 8 inch Altman 1000 watt fresnels. 22 each 360Q 6 x 9 Altman 750 watt ellipsoids. 24 each 360Q 6 x 12 Altman 750 watt ellipsoids. 24 each 360Q 6 x 16 Altman 750 watt ellipsoids. 4 each 1KL6 50° Altman 1000 watt ellipsoids. 3 each 1KL6 40° Altman 1000 watt ellipsoids. 6 each 1KL6 30° Altman 1000 watt ellipsoids. 4 each 1KL6 20° Altman 1000 watt ellipsoids. 15 each 1KL6 20-40° zoom Altman 1000 watt ellipsoids. 31 each 1000 watt wide pars.

Two each Lycian short throw follow spots located in a booth at the rear of the balcony. The lighting control board is a Strand Lighting LBX Genius located in the same booth. The board is currently programmed as a 36 channel two-scene with 24 submasters. Dimmers are soft patchable and cues may be set.



The standard lighting plot has a warm (R33) and cool (R60) wash from the booth wall and the side balcony walls covering the front of stage. 4 9 x 12 ellipsoids are also hung on the balcony walls as a center special. The warm and cool washes are continued from the #1 electric with 3 each 6 x 9 ellipsoids per color with frost pointed upstage.

The stage is down lit warm (R02) with fresnels. 6 each 1000 watt 6" on #1, 8 each 1000 watt 8" on #2 and 8 each 750 watt on #3. The cyc is lit red (R124), amber (R20) and blue (R80) and a par back wash in red (R26), amber (R21) and blue (R68)

is set. Pipe end side light is set on all four electrics. Center specials are set on #1 and additional specials are hung on both #1 and #2.

- ***House Light Control***

All auditorium house lights are on a keypad system. They are located in the light booth, backstage stage right wall and lobby area. There are settings for Movie, Full House, Half House, and Performance.

- ***Sound System***

The theatre has excellent natural acoustics and sound reinforcement is often not needed. However, there is a sound system available. The 48 channel Soundcraft K2 mixer is mounted in a balcony booth with the amp rack and patch bay located in a balcony top-rear room. There is a hard-wired snake going to front of stage, stage left and right, and upstage left and right. It terminates at a patch bay in the sound booth and an additional patch bay in the amplifier room itself to accommodate needed patching.

Three sets of Electro-Voice Sx500 speakers are located in the organ chambers on each side of the auditorium in a mono left/right setup and one Electro-Voice x300 speaker on each of the balcony lighting stanchions. They cover the auditorium in four zones. Orchestra, rear auditorium, loge and rear balcony. Additional zones include a new (2004) under balcony fill consisting of 16 Electro-Voice EVID 8.2c and a pair of EAW JF 80 mounted to front lip of the stage below the stage just below the stage level. Each zone is controlled, equalized and time aligned via an Architectural Acoustics Media Matrix system that is not user accessible.

Four Crown Macro-Tech 24x6 amplifiers power the main Sx500 speakers. A Crown CTS-600 is used on the under balcony fills while a Yamaha powers the JF 80s. A Crown DC-300A2 amplifier with Rane 27 band equalizer powers the two monitor sends. Monitor one is downstage on both sides and two upstage left and right. There are two TOA SM-60 monitor speakers. Also a pair of Peavey 112DL fill speakers are available.

There is a wireless system in the theatre. One eight channel Shure U Series and one 8 channel Shure ULX with distribution antennae systems. Both systems have distribution amps and cover the whole theatre. All 16 transmitters are equipped lapel mics. There is one wireless handheld mic. There are 5 Shure SM58 mics, 1 Shure SM57 mics, 1 Crown PZM mic, 4 Audio Technica boundary mics, and 3 choral mics. A variety of cables and stands are available.

The lighting booth has an independent sound feed of the house system with its own volume control.

The front of house console area is located in the center of the balcony just behind the loge section. It has a full view of the stage and a full aural view of the main clusters. This area includes user accessible 31 band equalizers for the House, Front Fills, Monitor one and Monitor two via an Ashley Protea 4.4G equalizer. There is a Yamaha SPX2000 mounted in the three 20 space racks built into the architecture behind the engineer. Playback is available through a Sony CD/Minidisc combination unit. This will record Minidisc, but not CD.

The “secondary” front of house area is comprised of a Mackie DFX6 mixer mounted on the wall next to the lighting console to be operated by the board operator. This mixer has complete accessibility to all snake lines and wireless microphones. This mixer can feed the main rig, the front fills and monitors. The DFX6 is limited to four channels of operation.

Also available and mounted in the amplifier room is a William Sound FM wireless listening assistant system with eight receivers with earbuds. This system is feed directly from the main processors.

There is a Fender Passport portable Public Address system that can be used.

- ***Intercommunication System***

The theatre is equipped with a Clear Com 2-channel intercom system. The A channel feeds the box-office and backstage landing. The B channel feeds the lighting booth (2), the sound booth, the pit, stage managers table, pin rail, stage left and upper pin rail. There are a total of 4 headsets for use at these stations.

- ***Emergency Telephone Numbers***

Emergency telephone numbers are posted on the bulletin board near the telephone backstage and in the box-office. They are:

Ambulance	723-3550
Hospital	723-3300
Police	723-2700
Fire	723-4200 or 723-7100
Emergencies	911

- ***Rules and Regulations***

One rule we enforce strictly is the prohibition of smoking in the theatre. This is an over 125 year old building with wooden floors, gridiron, and roof beams and would be very susceptible to fire.