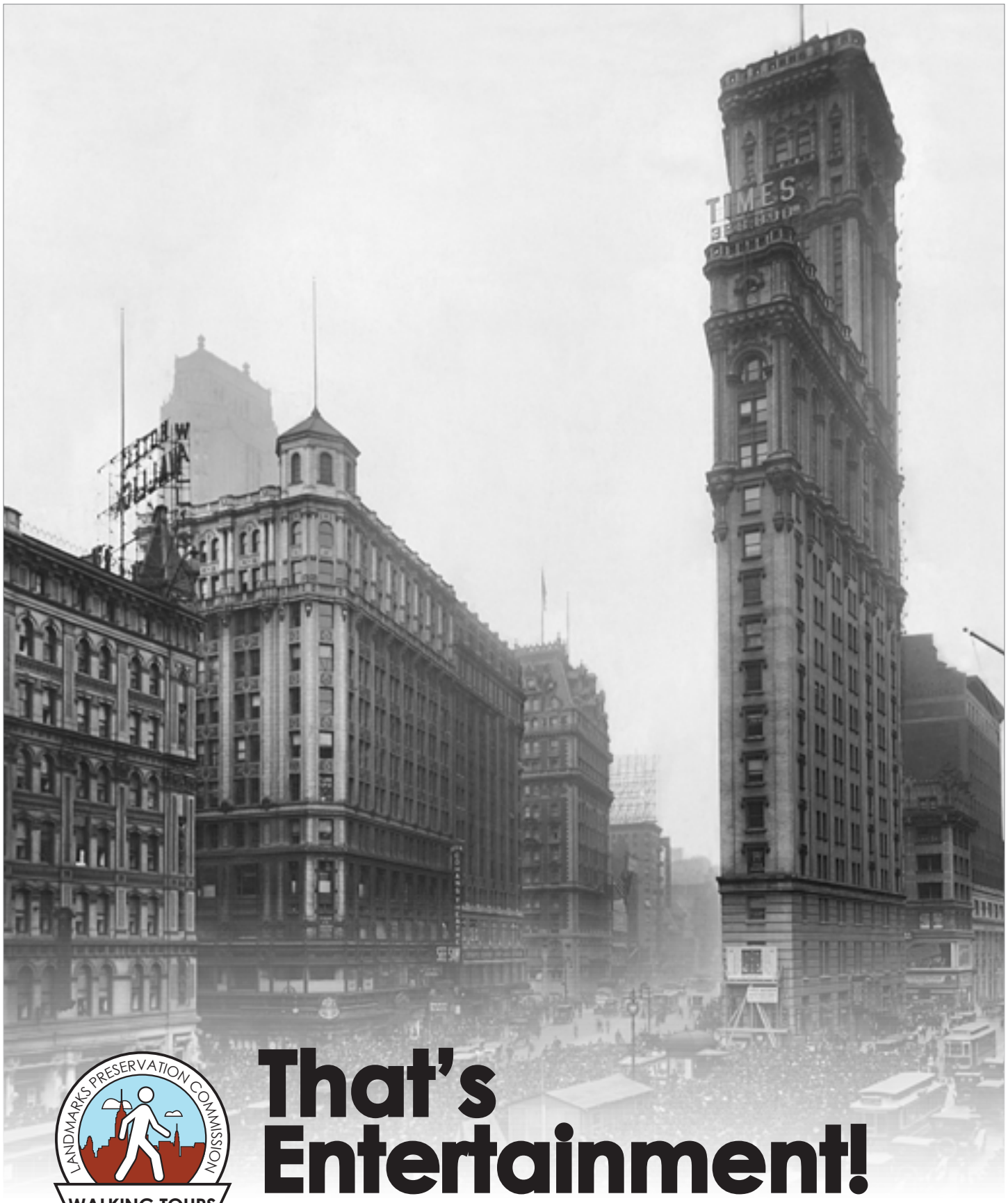
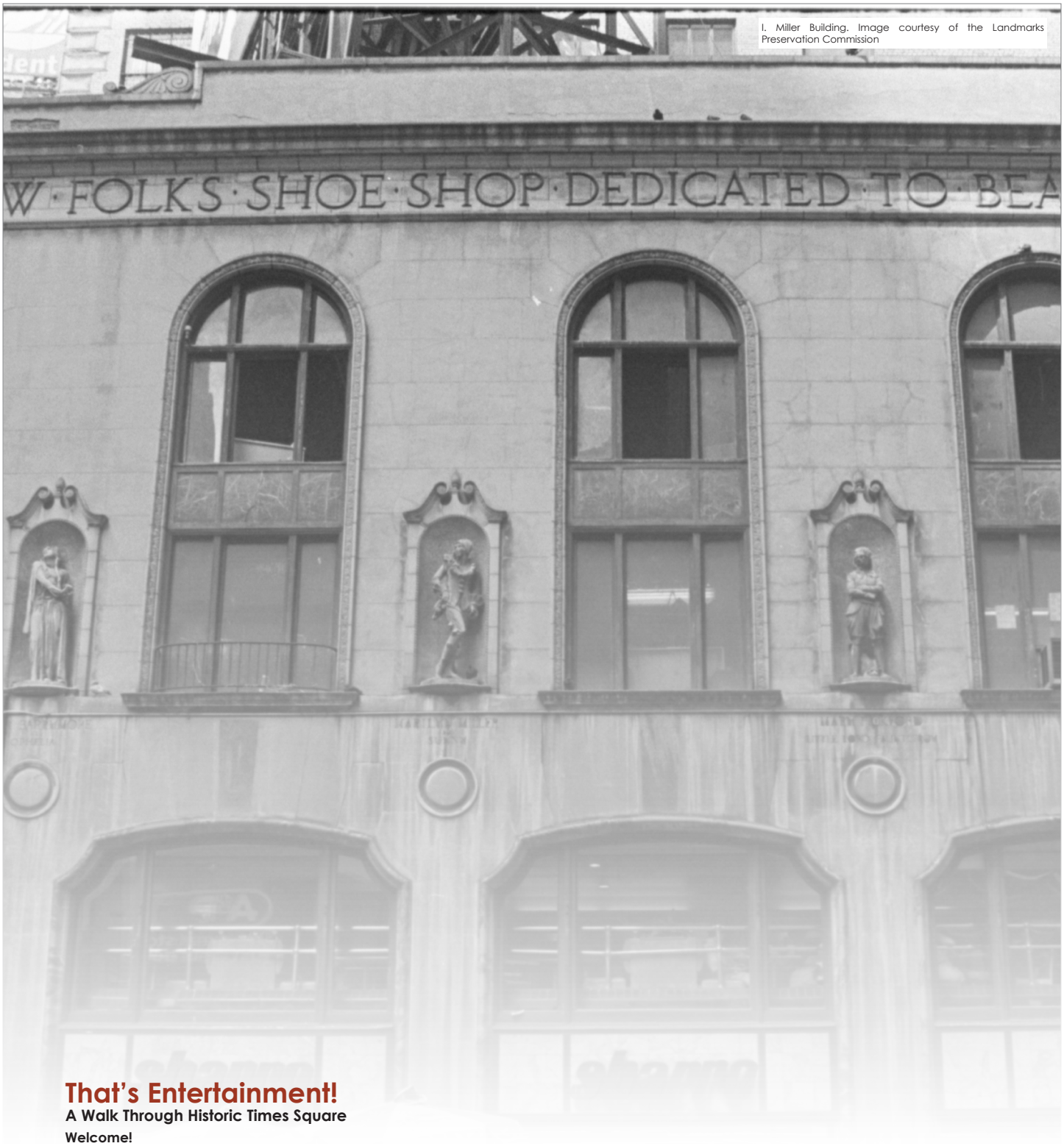


LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WALKING TOURS

That's Entertainment!

A Walk Through Historic Times Square

NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission



I. Miller Building. Image courtesy of the Landmarks Preservation Commission

That's Entertainment!

A Walk Through Historic Times Square

Welcome!

Times Square is one of the most exciting and historically significant entertainment districts in the world. This walking tour includes seventeen New York City Landmarks that illustrate the neighborhood's development from the start of the 20th century, when it was called Longacre Square, to the dazzling present moment. In addition to elegant structures associated with the entertainment industry and performing arts, the route also includes a club built for actors and theater enthusiasts, as well as allied hotels and commercial buildings. From start to finish, the tour lasts approximately 90 minutes.

Cover Image | One Times Square c. 1919. *Image courtesy of Wikipedia Commons*

From start to finish, the tour lasts approximately 90 minutes.

Start at the New Amsterdam Theatre, 214 West. 42nd Street.

W 50 St
W 49 St
W 48 St
W 47 St
W 46 St
W 45 St
W 44 St
W 43 St
W 42 St
W 41 St
W 40 St
W 39 St
Eighth Avenue
Broadway
Sixth Avenue
Seventh Avenue
Shubert Alley
Route via arcade
MTA
1 2 3 7
N Q R S
B D
F M
That's Entertainment!
A Walk Through Historic Times Square
1 New Amsterdam Theater [214 West 42nd Street]
2 Paramount Building [1501 Broadway]
3 New York Times Building [229 West 43rd Street]
4 St. James Theatre [222 West 44th Street]
5 Shubert Theatre [225 West 44th Street]
6 Music Box Theatre [239 West 45th Street]
7 Al Hirschfeld Theatre [302 West 45th Street]
8 Barrymore Theatre [243 West 47th Street]
9 Lunt-Fontanne Theatre [205 West 46th Street]
10 Palace Theatre [1564 Broadway]
11 I. Miller Building [1552 Broadway]
12 J. Kennedy Onassis High School [120 West 46th Street]
13 Lyceum Theatre [149 West 45th Street]
14 Lambs Club [128 West 44th Street]
15 Belasco Theatre [111 West 44th Street]
16 Stephen Sondheim Theatre [124 West 43rd Street]
17 Knickerbocker Hotel [1466 Broadway]
16 Tour Stops
Suggested Route
Subway Entrance
Feet
200

1 New Amsterdam Theatre
214 West 42nd Street

As home to the Ziegfeld Follies, as well as Eva Le Gallienne's Civic Repertory Theater and George White's "Scandals," this legendary theater has presented scores of great actors in memorable productions. Designed by Herts & Tallant in 1902-03, the New Amsterdam has a narrow Beaux-Arts-inspired facade disguised by a streamlined vertical sign dating from 1937, when the theater was used as a movie house. The spacious interior, seating more than 1,700, is adorned with splendid Art Nouveau decoration. The lobby, foyers, reception room, staircases, smoking room, and auditorium contain ornate terra-cotta panels evoking theatrical themes; murals by George Peixotto, Robert Blum, and others; faience stairway balustrades; art tiles designed by Henry Mercer; and ornate plaster, stone, and wood carving. Though the theater and interior became a Landmark in 1979, the New Amsterdam closed in 1985. The Walt Disney Company undertook a major restoration under the direction of Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer that rejuvenated the extraordinary interiors. The theater reopened in April 1997. From the vestibule, peer through the plate glass doors into the lobby, where a series of terra-cotta reliefs by the Paris-trained sculptor Roland Hinton Perry decorate the upper walls.

Sculpture detail, New Amsterdam Theatre facade. *Photo by Matthew Postal*

2 Paramount Building
1501 Broadway

Paramount Building illustration, c.1945.
Image courtesy of Museum of the City of New York (MCNY)

In 1926-27 the theater architects Rapp & Rapp designed this dramatically massed, 33-story skyscraper (at its completion, the tallest in the Times Square area) as offices for Paramount Pictures, as a home for the Paramount Theater (closed 1964, demolished 1967), and as an advertisement for the Paramount Corporation. The motion picture company's trademark, a mountain encircled by five-pointed stars, is echoed in the mountain-like massing of the four-faced clock, on which the hours are marked by five-pointed stars. The clock is crowned by a glass globe that, when illuminated, is visible for miles and is a focal point in Times Square. Designated a Landmark in 1987, the clocks and globe were restored in 1997; the eye-catching marquee, near the corner of 43rd Street, was recreated in 2001.

3 New York Times Building (Times Square Building)
229 West 43rd Street

Founded on Nassau Street in 1851, this world-famous newspaper moved to West 42nd Street in 1905, constructing a skyscraper headquarters at the crossing of Broadway and Seventh Avenue. In 1912-13 the first section of the New York Times Annex was built on West 43rd Street. Designed by Buchman & Fox to resemble the nearby tower, it featured identical materials and neo-Gothic details. The Annex soon became the newspaper's headquarters, accommodating editorial and executive departments, as well as all printing operations. The second stage of construction (Ludlow & Peabody, 1922-24) added five additional bays, as well as a seven-story tower in the French Renaissance style. This châteauesque feature gave the expanded Annex new prominence, making it visible from all corners of the entertainment district. In 1930-32, a west wing, designed by the celebrated Detroit architect Albert Kahn, was added; in 1942 the building was renamed the New York Times Building. The newspaper moved to 620 Eighth Avenue, between 40th and 41st Streets, in 2007, and 229 West 43rd Street is now used as an office building.

New York Times Annex in 1922. *Image courtesy of the New York City Public Library*

4 St. James Theatre
222 West 44th Street

The restrained Beaux-Arts style facade of this theater was designed by Warren & Wetmore, architects of Grand Central Terminal. Commissioned by the producer Abraham L. Erlanger in 1926-27, the theater was renamed the St. James following Erlanger's death in 1930. The landmarked interior contains a spacious neo-Georgian style auditorium seating 1,600 people. The St. James has housed such celebrated American musicals as *Oklahoma!*, *The King and I*, and *Hello Dolly!*.

5 Shubert Theatre
225 West 44th Street

This is the flagship playhouse of the Shubert Organization, a major force in the construction of theaters and the production of plays in New York and elsewhere in the United States since the early 20th century. Built in 1912-13 by Henry B. Herts as a memorial to Sam Shubert, the oldest of the three Shubert brothers, the upper floors also served as the headquarters of the organization's theatrical empire. The theater was designed in a lavish manner with Venetian Renaissance sgraffito decoration on the exterior and, on the interior, elaborate plasterwork and murals by the American painter J. Mortimer Lichtenauer. The Shubert and its interior was designated a Landmark in 1987. The theater has been home to many successful productions, among them the record-breaking *A Chorus Line*, which ran more than 6,000 performances from 1975 to 1990. The 1,460 seat auditorium was restored in 1996.

A Chorus Line, Shubert Theatre. *Image courtesy of Creative Commons*

6 Music Box Theatre
239 West 45th Street

Producer Sam Harris built this theater (C. Howard Crane & E. George Kiehler) in 1920 to present Irving Berlin's Music Box Revues. The revues ran for five years, after which time the theater housed many successful plays and musicals, including George S. Kaufman and George and Ira Gershwin's *Of Thee I Sing*, Kaufman and Edna Ferber's *Dinner at Eight* and *Stage Door*, Moss Hart and Irving Berlin's *As Thousands Cheer*, and several hits by Kaufman and Hart, including *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. The elegant English-inspired neoclassical exterior is articulated by a porch supported by four attenuated columns; the Adamesque interior features delicate plaster details and murals. The Music Box and its interior was designated a Landmark in 1987.

Press photo of Irving Berlin and the starts of Alexander's Ragtime Band, 1938. *Image courtesy of Wikipedia Commons*

7 Al Hirschfeld Theatre
302 West 45th Street

Among the more spectacular theaters in Times Square, this Moorish-inspired structure (C. Albert Landsburgh, 1923-24) was built by the producer Martin Beck, who operated the theater until his death in 1940. The interiors reflect Beck's desire to build the most lavish legitimate theater in the Broadway area. The fantastical Moorish-Byzantine-style spaces were designed by Lansburgh in collaboration with the naturalist and interior designer Albert Herter. Since the 1960s the Martin Beck Theater has been a popular venue for musicals and has housed such hits as *Bye Bye Birdie*, *Man of La Mancha*, and *Into the Woods*. Designated a Landmark and Interior in 1987, as a tribute to the famed American caricaturist and illustrator, the theater was renamed in 2002.

8 Barrymore Theatre
243 West 47th Street

Built in 1928 by the Shuberts to honor their star performer, American stage actress Ethel Barrymore, this theater is among Herbert J. Krapp's most interesting designs—its facade takes the form of a giant classical Roman window with a terra-cotta grid. The interior is unusual for its mock-Elizabethan decoration. Barrymore, who is immortalized by a statue on the former I. Miller Building (See Tour Stop 11), appeared in the theater's first production as well as in three subsequent plays performed between 1929 and 1931. Designated a Landmark and Interior in 1987, among the theater's many successful productions were *Gay Divorce* (starring Fred Astaire), *Key Largo*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, A *Raisin in the Sun*, and *Lettice & Lovage*.

9 Lunt-Fontanne Theatre
205 West 46th Street

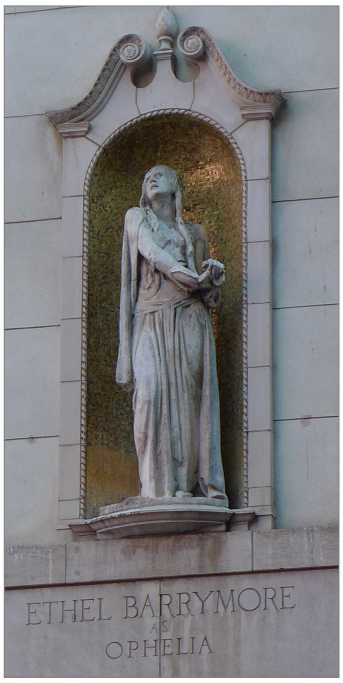
Built as the headquarters of the influential Broadway producer Charles Dillingham, the Beaux-Arts Globe is the only surviving theater that was designed by Carrère & Hastings, architect of the New York Public Library on Fifth Avenue, in 1909-10. After serving as a cinema for many years, the Lunt-Fontanne was returned to legitimate theater use in 1958; at the same time, however, its interior was gutted and its name was changed. Dillingham had been able to attract many major stars to play here, including Sarah Bernhardt, Lynn Fontanne, Fred and Adele Astaire, and Fanny Brice. In more recent years the theater has been favored for musicals, chief among them *The Sound of Music* and *Beauty and the Beast*. It was designated a Landmark in 1987.

Globe Theatre, 1910. *Image courtesy of Wikipedia Commons*

10 Palace Theatre
1564 Broadway

The legendary Palace Theater, built by Kirchhoff & Rose in 1912-13 as a vaudeville house, has hosted a greater number of stars and a greater variety of entertainment than any other Broadway venue. Although built for Martin Beck, it was operated primarily by Beck's rival E. F. Albee of the Keith-Albee Circuit, which produced vaudeville nationwide. The first production at the Palace was a flop, but the appearance of Sarah Bernhardt in May 1913 marked the beginning of an era of unprecedented success. The Palace featured such great vaudeville stars as Bob Hope, Sophie Tucker, George Jessel, Will Rogers, Jimmy Durante, the Marx Brothers, W. C. Fields, Harry Houdini, and Eddie Cantor. Succumbing to changes in the entertainment industry, the Palace became a movie house in 1932, but since the opening of *Sweet Charity* in 1966 it has been used as a theater for musicals. The landmarked interior was refurbished in 1990–91 (Fox & Fowle, architect) and reopened, appropriately, with *The Will Rogers Follies*.

11 I. Miller Building
1552 Broadway



Restored Ethel Barrymore statue.
Photo by Matthew Postal

Marble statues, representing leading actresses of the 1920s, adorn the south facade of the former Times Square branch of Israel Miller's shoe chain. Located at the northeast corner of 46th Street, this three-story structure was remodeled in 1926 by architect Louis H. Freeland as a tribute to the theatrical profession. Promoted as the "Show Folks Shoe Shop," the store invited customers to nominate the actresses that would fill a row of four niches. Sculptor Alexander Stirling Calder executed the figures, depicting Ethel Barrymore as Ophelia, Marilyn Miller as Sunny, Rosa Ponselle as Norma, and Mary Pickford as Little Lord Fauntelroy. The store closed in the 1970s. Designated a Landmark in 1999, the south facade was handsomely restored in 2013-14.

12 Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis High School for International Careers
120 West 46th Street

P. S. 67 (1893-94) was the first school known to have been designed by C. B. J. Snyder, who as superintendent of buildings for New York City's Board of Education for three decades was responsible for the design of many of the city's finest school buildings. This Romanesque Revival structure enjoyed fame as home of the High School of Performing Arts from the founding of the school in 1948 until 1985, when it merged with LaGuardia High School. The school's curriculum emphasized studies in music, drama, and dance, and its graduates include Eliot Feld, Arthur Mitchell, Rita Moreno, Liza Minnelli, Al Pacino, Ben Vereen, and Edward Villella. Designated a Landmark in 1982, the building was restored in 1991–93.

13 Lyceum Theatre
149 West 45th Street

The Beaux-Arts facade of the Lyceum is among the most beautiful in the theater district. Built for the early 20th-century theater impresario Daniel Frohman, the playhouse was designed in 1902-03 by Herts & Tallant, New York's most talented theater architects. Although it is a two-balcony house, the interior is relatively small and was planned for intimate plays. Lush plaster detail embellishes walls and ceilings and is adorned with the initial L. The theater is further enhanced by marble paneling and lobby murals by James Wall Finn. The Lyceum has housed many of Broadway's most famous comedies and dramas, including a run of classic plays produced in the late 1960s by the APA-Phoenix Theater. The list of stars who have performed at the Lyceum is unparalleled and includes William Gillette, Ethel Barrymore, Billie Burke, Walter Huston, Bette Davis, Judy Holliday, Joseph Cotton, John Garfield, Montgomery Clift, Ruth Gordon, Melvyn Douglas, Alan Bates, Lauren Bacall, Angela Lansbury, Billy Dee Williams, Helen Hayes, Rosemary Harris, and Jefferson Mays. The Schubert Archives, preserving the history of the Shubert Organization, is housed on the upper floors. The Lyceum became a Landmark in 1974, the interior in 1987.

Lyceum Theatre. *Photo by Matthew Postal*

14 Lambs Club (Chatwal Hotel)
128 West 44th Street

Founded in 1874, the Lambs was a club for actors and theater enthusiasts. In 1903 the commission for the Lambs' new clubhouse went to the firm McKim, Mead & White—all three principals were members. Stanford White was responsible for the Colonial Revival design which is ornamented with lambs' and rams' heads. The size of the building was doubled in 1915 when an addition to the west, a virtual copy of White's original, was constructed by George A. Freeman. The Lambs sold the building to the Church of the Nazarene in 1973, which subleased part of the structure as an off-Broadway theater. It was designated a Landmark in 1974. Following a major renovation, which included construction of a roof-top addition, the Chatwal Hotel opened in 2010.

15 Belasco Theatre
111 West 44th Street

Actor, director, and manager David Belasco, one of the most important figures in the history of the American stage, conceived this theater as a "living room" in which actors and audience would come in close contact. Designed by George Kesiter in 1906-07, the use of the homey Colonial Revival style heightens the domestic theme. The wood-paneled ticket lobby features Tiffany glass, as well as a mural (one of 18 in the building) by the Ashcan school painter Everett Shinn. Designated a Landmark (and Interior) in 1987, the lavish interiors were restored by architect Francesca Russo in 2010.

Belasco Theatre c. 1987. *Image courtesy of the Landmarks Preservation Commission*

16 Stephen Sondheim Theatre
124 West 43rd Street

This neo-Georgian style theater was designed by Allen, Ingalls & Hoffman for actor/producer/director Henry W. Miller in 1917-18 and was the venue for Miller's own productions until his death in 1926. The building was converted to a movie house in 1969 and was operated as the popular disco nightclub Xexon in 1978-84. The exterior was designated a Landmark in 1987. During construction of the Bank of America Tower, the interiors were demolished and the brick facade was integrated into a new theater designed by Cook+Fox Architects. Completed in 2010, it was Broadway's first theater to achieve LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) gold status from the U.S. Green Building Council. At this time, to mark the American composer's 80th birthday, it was renamed the Stephen Sondheim Theatre.

17 Knickerbocker Hotel
1466 Broadway

In the first decades of the 20th century, many grand hotels were erected in the Times Square area; the only survivor is the former Knickerbocker at the southeast corner of Broadway and 42nd Street. Designed by Marvin & Davis, in association with Bruce Price, the hotel opened in 1906. Financed by John Jacob Astor IV, this Beaux-Arts red brick building with terra-cotta detail and a prominent mansard roof was among the city's most lavish hostelries and was a popular dining and dancing spot in the new theater district. The hotel closed during the Depression and was converted to offices. Designated a Landmark in 1988, the building reopened as a hotel in 2015.

Knickerbocker Hotel, c. 1915. *Image courtesy of MCNY*

Acknowledgements

Walking tour research and text was prepared by Matt Postal, an architectural historian at the Landmarks Preservation Commission. The layout and mapping was designed by Daniel Watts of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Support was generously provided by the New York Landmarks Foundation, which fosters the activities of the Commission and provides funds for educational outreach programs.

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