ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An entertainment centre has an entrance communicat-
ing with a lobby which communicates with a plurality of enclosed entertainment areas arranged around the periphery of a control booth.

The tremendous auditoriums of previously constructed motion picture theatres presents several important difficulties due to their relatively enormous size. Long waiting lines often develop when patrons are not permitted to enter during the final portion of a feature film which is an annoyance to the potential patron and to the general public. The sound, for example, must have a volume loud enough to reach a patron in a seat farthest away from the screen therefore even if multiple speakers the sound is amplified to such proportions that the spectators sitting in close proximity to one of the speakers is substantially deafened and his enjoyment of the sound re-
production is thereby seriously impaired if not destroyed. Likewise, an image displayed upon a screen must be large enough to be clearly distinguished by a person seated in one of the rear rows of seats thereby making the image disproportionately large for those members of the audience seated nearest the screen.

Largely single unit theatre buildings having continuous presentations, the viewing patrons are greatly annoyed and inconvenienced by other patrons who arrive and are seated during showing of the feature. Similarly, other patrons leaving during showing of the feature, inconvenience and distract the remaining patrons thereby reducing the plot comprehension and understanding of the status of the different characters is confused and the enjoyment of the entertainment as a whole is substantially reduced.

Concession areas in large single unit theatres are often packed during intermission between features and almost deserted at other times thereby resulting in annoyance and inconvenience to patrons and inefficient use of sales personnel. Large single units theatres also have the disadvantage of excessive upkeep costs for heating, air conditioning, lighting, maintenance, and the like. Patrons enter-
ing a large single unit theatre which is darkened during presentation of the feature often must travel relatively long distances through the darkened auditorium to locate a seat and similarly upon leaving a darkened auditorium during the showing of the feature, the contrast of a relatively brightly lighted lobby is painful to the eyes of the leaving patrons.

The principal objects of the present invention are: to provide a novel and compact multi-unit entertainment centre substantially reducing or eliminating the aforesaid difficulties and inconveniences while maintaining a desirably large seating capacity and maximum performance intimacy; to provide such a multi-unit structure adapted for simultaneously presenting separate events in separated areas such as lectures, live stage plays, operas, musical presentations, motion pictures, civic meetings, promotional meetings, religious services, closed circuit television of sports events, dances, and the like each having the light and sound separately controlled from a control booth to provide such a multi-unit structure and an arrangement thereof which is adapted to be connected as a part of a shopping center of either the strip type building or enclosed mall type in either existing or planned commercial buildings or shopping centers; to provide such a multi-unit structure having an arrangement which will substantially increase the utilization of the entire structure and which is substantially more economical to build and operate than a single unit theatre or the like within the same space; to provide such a multi-unit structure having a plurality of enclosed entertainment areas each communicating separately with the control booth and with a lobby and concession area whereby patrons for each area may enter and leave their respective area without disturbing other events in progress; to provide such a multi-unit structure and arrangement therefor particularly adapted for simultaneously showing several separate motion picture feature films having staggered starting times and with each having an appeal to a separate portion of the viewing public; and to provide such a multi-unit structure which is economical to construct and operate, efficient in utilization of space and area, economical in utilization of operating personnel, and interestingly and attractively arranged.

Other objects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein are set forth by way of illustration and example certain embodiments of this invention.

FIG. 1 is a plan view of an entertainment centre and an interior arrangement therefor embodying features of the present invention and particularly showing the multi-unit entertainment areas arranged around the periphery of a control booth.

FIG. 2 is a plan view of a public restroom area below the control booth.

FIG. 3 is a transverse sectional view through the entertainment centre taken on line 3-3, FIG. 1.

FIG. 4 is a transverse sectional view through one of the entertainment areas and a passageway and projection chamber between a lobby and the said entertainment area taken on line 4-4, FIG. 1.

FIG. 5 is a plan view of a modified entertainment centre showing a modified interior arrangement.

Referring more in detail to the drawings:

The reference numeral 1 generally designates building or structure enclosing a multi unit entertainment centre having a service area or common lobby 2 which communicates separately with a plurality of enclosed entertainment areas 3 arranged around the periphery of an enclosed control booth 4 having light and sound controls therein for simultaneously controlling light and sound levels in each of the entertainment areas 3.

A ticket to one of the entertainment areas 3 is purchased at a ticket booth 5 having conventional ticket dispensing device (not shown) and conventional change dispensing equipment (not shown) therein. The ticket booth 5 is preferably of a size to comfortably house the necessary equipment and a person to operate same. The ticket booth 5 is positioned at an entrance to the building 1 and after purchasing a ticket, the patron enters the lobby 2 through one of a plurality of outwardly swinging entrance doors 6.

The entrance doors 6 provide communication from an exterior area, such as an enclosed shopping center mall, public side walk, or the like to the common lobby 2.
Within the lobby 2 is a concession stand 7 adapted to dispense conventional items, such as candy, soft drinks, pop corn, ice cream, hamburgers, and like food and refreshment items.

The control booth 4 is entered from the lobby 2 by means of a flight of stairs 8 as contained within the control booth 4 are a plurality of control panels 9 for controlling light and sound levels within each of the separate entertainment areas 3. When the entertainment areas are used for exhibition of motion picture features, a pair of motion picture projectors 10 and 11 are aligned with a projection window 12 in a respective control booth wall 13 for each of the separate entertainment areas 3.

Immediately below the control booth 4 is a public restroom area 14 having a foyer or waiting area 15 which may be entered from the lobby 2 by means of a flight of stairs 16. The foyer or waiting area 15 is large enough to include suitable furniture, such as chairs, tables, lamps, and the like. It is also desirable to include service items, such as pay phones and vending machines for personal items, such as combs and the like. Also included in the foyer 15 is a small storage area 17 for storing small items, such as marquee letters advertising materials, lobby signs, displacement, and the like. In the illustrated structure, the storage area 17 is immediately below the stairs 8 from the lobby 2 to the control booth 4.

The restroom area 14 is divided into a men's area 18 and a women's area 19. A large storage area 20 is positioned adjacent the restroom areas 18 and 19 and in the illustrated structure is entered through the men's area 18. The large storage area 20 is particularly adapted for storing cleaning equipment; such as mops, brooms, vacuum cleaners, cleaning compounds and the like; large display items, such as large posters for coming attractions and program schedules; promotional material; and the like.

Within each of the enclosed entertainment areas 3 are a plurality of rows 21 of seats 22 arranged in a plurality of sections 23. An aisle 24 generally separates the sections 23, however, each section 23 has an aisle 24 on at least one side. Each of the rows 21 of seats 22 face an elevated stage 25 which is particularly adapted for the presentation of lectures, live stage plays, operas, musical presentations, and the like. Positioned above the stage 25 is a screen 26 for use when the respective entertainment area 3 is to be used to present motion picture features. The screen 26 may be permanently mounted in the respective entertainment area 3. The stage 25 may be of a raised type adapted to be raised out of position or lowered into the desired position.

Each of the entertainment areas 3 communicate individually with the lobby 2 through a separate entrance 27 which may be used for normal ingress and egress. An emergency exit 28 in the form of an exit only door is provided for each of the entertainment areas 3 thereby furnishing an alternate means of egress from each of the entertainment areas 3 in the event of an emergency situation, such as a fire, riot, or the like.

When the enclosed entertainment areas 3 are arranged around the periphery of the control booth 4 and the number thereof is greater than two, as in the illustrated arrangement, it is necessary to provide at least one passageway 29 from the lobby 2 to at least one of the entertainment areas 3 to eliminate the necessity of traveling through one of the entertainment areas 3. In the illustrated structure, a pair of passageways 29 are each positioned between the control booth 4 and one of the entertainment areas 3 immediately adjacent the lobby 2. A projection chamber 30 is positioned above each of the passageways 29 and has aligned projection windows 31 with a control booth wall 13 forming the rear of the respective entertainment areas 3 and one wall of the projection chamber 30 respectively.

In the illustrated structure, the building 1 is substantially rectangular in floor plan and includes a pair of front entertainment areas or theatres 33 and 34 on opposite sides of the service area or lobby 2 and a pair of rear entertainment areas 35 and 36. The building 1 has a front wall 37, rear wall 38, and side walls 39 and 40. The front entertainment areas 33 and 34 are each in a corner of the building 1 defined by a portion of the front wall 37 and one of the side walls 39 and 40 respectively. The rear entertainment areas 35 and 36 are each in a corner of the building 1 defined by a portion of the rear wall 38 and one of the side walls 39 and 40 respectively. Each stage 25 and screen 26 is in one of the corners of the building 1. The ticket booth 5 are positioned at the center of the front wall 37.

The front entertainment areas 33 and 34 each have a rear wall 41 which is a common wall with the lobby 2. Each of the rear walls 41 has a lobby or entrance section 42 and a passageway section 43 and adjacent ends of the lobby or entrance section 42 and the passageway section 43 are spaced apart to form the entrance 27 and adjacent end portions of the lobby section 42 and passageway section 43 are parallel thereby forming a short hall or passageway into the respective front entertainment areas 33 or 34 which serves to block light and sound from the lobby 2. Suitable doors 44 are positioned in the entrance 27 to each of the front entertainment areas 33 and 34. Each of the passageway sections 43 of the rear walls 41 has an offset 45 thereby guiding the patrons into the respective front entertainment area 33 or 34. The projection window 12 in the passageway section 43 is positioned above a ceiling 46 of the respective passageway 29.

The rear entertainment areas 35 and 36 each have a rear wall 47 which has an arcuate common wall portion 48 separating one of the front entertainment areas 33 and 34 from one of the rear entertainment areas 35 and 36 respectively. A straight common wall portion 49 separates the rear entertainment areas 35 and 36. A booth portion 50 of the rear wall 47 of each of the rear entertainment areas is a common wall between the respective rear entertainment area 35 or 36 and the control booth 4. The projection window 12 is positioned in the booth portion 50 of the rear wall 47 for each of the rear entertainment areas 35 and 36.

Adjacent ends of the arcuate common wall portion 48 and the booth portion 50 of each of the rear walls 47 are spaced apart and substantially parallel to form a short entrance passageway from the passageway into the respective rear entertainment areas 35 or 36 which also serves to block light and sound from the lobby 2 in cooperation with the respective passageway 29. Suitable curtains or doors (not shown) may be mounted in each entrance 27 to the respective rear entertainment areas 35 and 36 to block additional light and sound.

The control booth 4 and the restroom areas 14 are each enclosed within a five sided room having a pair of the sides common with the booth portion 50 of the rear entertainment areas 35 and 36. A pair of booth walls 51 and 52 are common walls with the passageway 29 between the front entertainment areas 33 and 34 respectively. Each of the booth walls 51 and 52 have projection window 31 aligned with the projection window 31 in the respective front entertainment area rear walls 41. The projection window 12 in the booth portions 50 of the rear walls 47 are substantially parallel with the respective passageway into the respective rear entertainment areas 35 and 36. The booth projection windows 12 in the passageway portions 43 of the rear walls 47 and the projection chambr windows 31 are also simultaneously with the screen 26 in the respective front entertainment areas 33 and 34. The control booth 4 has a lobby wall 53 which is a common wall with the lobby 2 and which has the stairway 8 thereon and by a sound blocking communication between the lobby and the control booth.

The rows 21 of seats 22 are arranged in an arcuate manner in each of the front and rear entertainment areas whereby each seat directly faces the respective screen 26.
and each of the rear walls 41 and 47 are arcuate, except for the straight common wall 49. The curved or arcuate walls thereby provide unusual, interesting, and attractive spaces and wall surfaces.

FIG. 5 illustrates a modified interior arrangement of the rectangular building 1' which is particularly adapted for an enclosed mall type shopping center. The building or a portion thereof is substantially rectangular with front theatres 54 and 55 and rear theatres 41 and 47 arranged in the corners of the rectangular area. The rectangular area of the theatre building or entertainment centre is defined by a rear wall 58, side walls 59 and 60 and a front wall 61. Suitable shops 62 and concession areas 62' may be arranged along a mall and along the front wall 61 whereby the front wall 61 is a common wall between the shops 62 and concession areas 62' and the respective front theatres 54 and 55. A ticket booth 63 is positioned between spaced concession areas 62'.

The front theatres 54 and 55 each have a rear wall 64 having a lobby portion 65 on one side of an entrance 66 and passageway portion 67 on the other side of the entrance 66. The front theatre 54 and 55 each have a theatre side wall 68 which is a common wall between one of the rear theatres 56 and 57 and one of the front theatres 54 and 55 respectively.

Each of the front theatres 54 and 55 and each of the rear theatres 56 and 57 communicates individually with the lobby 73 through a separate entrance which may be used for normal ingress and egress. An emergency exit 69 in the form of an exit only door is provided for each of the theatres thereby furnishing an alternate means of egress from the theatre building 1' in the event of an emergency situation, such as a fire, riot, or the like.

A projection booth 70 has side walls 71 and a front wall 72. The front wall 72 of the projection booth 70 is a common wall with a lobby 73. The side walls 71 of the projection booth 70 are each a common wall with one of the rear theatres 56 or 57 and extend outwardly from the rear wall 58 thereby enclosing the projection booth 70.

The rear theatres 56 and 57 are each enclosed within the space bounded by the rear wall 58, one of the side walls 59 or 60, one of the theatre side walls 68, and one of the side walls 71 of the projection booth 70.

A screen 74 is positioned in each of the front theatres 54 and 55 at the corner formed by the intersection of the front wall 61 with one of the side walls 59 and 60 respectively and each of the screens is above a stage 75. A screen 76 is positioned in each of the rear theatres 56 and 57 and is parallel with the side walls 59 and 60 respectively.

A passageway 77 is formed between the passageway portion 67 of the rear wall 64 of each of the front theatres 54 and 55 and the respective side wall 71 of the projection booth 70. In the illustrated structure, a passageway 77 extends from the lobby 73 to the rear theatre 56 between the front theatre 54 and the projection booth 70 and a passageway 77 extends from the lobby 73 to the rear theatre 57 between the front theatre 55 and the projection booth 70.

A projection chamber 78 is formed above each of the passageways 77 has a pair of aligned projection windows 79 and 80 in the passageway portions 67 of the rear wall 64 and in the side wall 71 of the projection booth respectively. The aligned projection windows 79 and 80 are positioned to permit suitable projectors 81 and 82 to be directed substantially perpendicular to the screen 74 in each of the front theatres 54 and 55.

A projection window 83 in each of the side walls 71 of the projection booth 70 is substantially parallel with the screen 76 in each of the rear theatres 56 and 57 whereby suitable projectors 84 and 85 are substantially perpendicular to the respective screen 74.

A control panel 86 is positioned adjacent each of the projection windows in the projection booth 70 whereby light levels and sound volume may be separately and simultaneously controlled within each of the theatres whereby staggered starting times may be used for separate feature films in each of the theatres within the building 1'.

What I claim and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:

1. An entertainment centre comprising:
   (a) a substantially rectangular building enclosing an entertainment centre,
   (b) an enclosed control booth having light and sound control means therein,
   (c) a plurality of enclosed entertainment areas arranged around said control booth, each of said entertainment areas being in respective corners of said rectangular building, said enclosed entertainment areas each separately communicating with said control booth whereby light and sound may be simultaneously and separately controlled therein,
   (d) a plurality of walls enclosing said control booth,
   (e) a plurality of said enclosed entertainment areas each having a rear wall, a portion of said rear walls being spaced from a respective control booth wall,
   (f) a plurality of projection chambers,
   (g) aligned projection windows in each of said projection chambers, said aligned windows being in a control booth wall and in an entertainment area rear wall respectively,
   (h) a screen in each of said enclosed entertainment areas,
   (i) a plurality of rows of seats in each of said entertainment areas, said seats facing said respective screen,
   (j) motion picture projection means in said control booth for simultaneously producing a separate feature on each of said screens,
   (k) a service area separately communicating with each of said enclosed entertainment areas and said control booth,
   (l) said plurality of said entertainment area rear walls each defining a passageway between said control booth and said respective entertainment area,
   (m) each of said projection chambers being above one of said passageways,
   (n) each of said passageways is from said service area to one of said plurality of entertainment areas, and
   (o) said projection chambers being enclosed.

2. A substantially rectangular theatre building comprising:
   (a) an entrance having a ticket booth therein,
   (b) a lobby within the theatre building and adjacent said entrance,
   (c) a concession area adjacent said entrance,
   (d) a public restroom area communicating with said lobby,
   (e) a centrally located multisided elevated control booth enclosed within a plurality of side walls and having motion picture projection means therein, said control booth communicating with said lobby,
   (f) a plurality of enclosed entertainment areas arranged around said control booth and communicating therewith and each of said enclosed entertainment areas communicating separately with said lobby, said entertainment areas each being in one corner of the rectangular theatre building and enclosed by a plurality of walls,
   (g) a plurality of rows of seats in each of said entertainment areas,
   (h) a screen in each of said entertainment areas at a front portion thereof, each of said screens facing said respective rows of seats and said control booth and said projection means therein whereby a separate motion picture may be simultaneously projected on each of said screens,
   (i) passageways from said lobby to respective entertainment areas, said passageways each being between...
at least one of said control booth side walls and at least one of said entertainment area walls,
(i) a plurality of projection chambers each being above one of said passageways, and
(k) an aligned pair of projection windows in each of said projection chambers, one of said aligned windows being in one of said side walls of said control booth and the other window being in a respective entertainment area rear wall adjacent said control booth.

3. The theatre building as set forth in claim 2 wherein:
(a) said control booth is a five sided room,
(b) one of said side walls of said control booth is a common wall with said lobby,
(c) each of a pair of said side walls of said control booth is a common wall with one of said passageways and one of said projection chambers, and
(d) each of a pair of said side walls of said control booth is a common wall with one of said entertainment areas.

4. A theatre structure comprising:
(a) a building having outside walls and a roof forming a substantially rectangular enclosure,
(b) an entrance generally centrally arranged in one of said walls,
(c) a lobby within said building adjacent said entrance,
(d) a plurality of walls and a floor defining a control booth with the floor thereof at a level above the lobby floor, said booth being at the rear of the lobby relative the entrance and having stairs communicating with the lobby,
(e) interior walls connected to the outside walls and extending therefrom in cooperative relation to define enclosed entertainment areas arranged around the control booth, certain of said interior walls being common with an entertainment area and the lobby, and certain of said interior walls being common with an entertainment area and the control booth and certain of said interior walls being common with two entertainment areas whereby there is an entertainment area in each corner of said rectangular building,
(f) passageways from said lobby to respective entertainment areas,
(g) a screen in each of said entertainment areas remote from the control booth and generally facing toward said booth,
(h) a plurality of rows of seats in each of said entertainment areas facing the respective screen,
(i) projection openings in the control booth walls communicating with respective entertainment areas,
(j) projection equipment in the control booth arranged to project pictures through the projection openings to the screens in the respective entertainment areas and selectively operative whereby a picture may be projected on to all of the screens and the projection of the pictures on to a respective screen is independent of the projection on to another.

References Cited

UNITED STATES PATENTS

1,526,160 2/1925 Luse ____________________ 52—6
1,957,947 5/1934 Dreyfuss ________________ 52—6
2,895,179 7/1959 Wilson ________________ 52—6
3,422,581 1/1969 Allen ________________ 52—6

ALFRED C. PERHAM, Primary Examiner

U.S. Cl. X.R.