

Payret Theater Depicts its Classical Style Façade in Old Havana



Everybody seems to know The Payret Theater, on Prado and San Martín and directly across from Capitolio. Payret has a long history. It opened its doors on January 24th 1877 and was called "The Red Coliseum," for being completely upholstered in red. Overlooking Central Park, this theatre was revamped in 1951, with seating for 1,890, keeping the same name that it was given in 1877. The architecture of the building blends perfectly into the eclectic neighborhood

It has a Classical style façade, but the interior is typical 1950s-style modernity using concepts by the architect Eugenio Batista who oversaw the plans. Long glass panels at the entrance, visible beams in the ceiling, and the integration of the visual arts with architecture, expressed in sculpture and the theater's interior. Seating is provided in orchestra & balcony levels. On the auditorium walls are bas-reliefs depicting the nine Muses and a bronze figure called 'Illusion' by foremost sculptress - Rita Longa in the lobby.

And did you know that the first film made in Cuba and premiered in the silent era was *The Bushes*, on November 24th 1915, in the Payret. The Payret has seen all kinds of theatre in its day: Opera, Operetta, Zarzuela, Drama, and Comedy. Today its programming consists of Cuban films, occasionally a Hollywood

blockbuster and it is one of the main venues for the Havana Film Festival.

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