

# New-Look Palladium Reopens

By SUZANNE SLESIN

**D**ESPITE the threat of legal action, two openings, not one, were scheduled for the new Palladium discothèque on East 14th Street last night. About 1,000 people were invited to an 8:30 P.M. "preview" of the nightclub. Three thousand more were expected for what was billed as the "premiere" at 11.

"The place can hold 3,500 people," said Steve Rubell, who with Ian Schrager describes himself as a consultant to the club. "We don't know how many to expect; people in New York come if they are invited or not."

The 104,000-square-foot theater, which has been an opera house, a

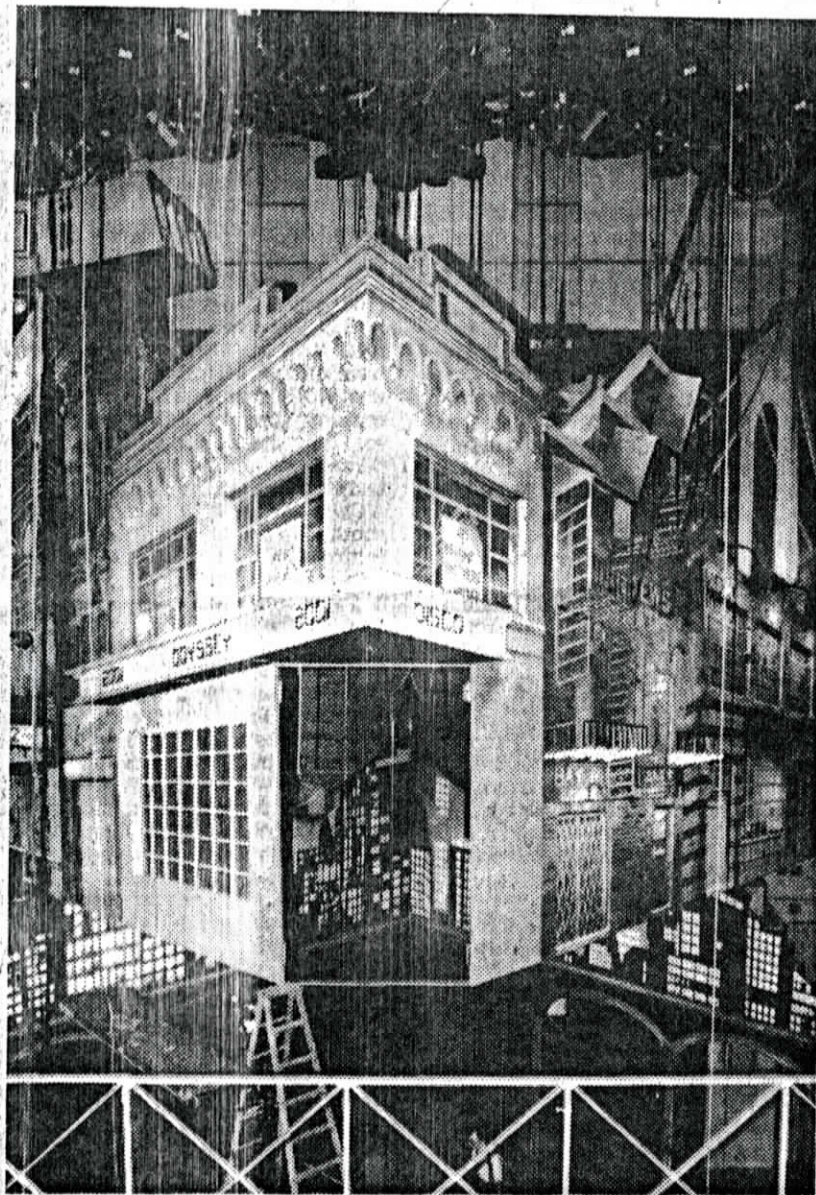
**An opera house, ballroom and rock concert hall turns discothèque.**

ballroom and a rock concert hall, has been converted by Mr. Rubell and Mr. Schrager, the former owners of Studio 54, into what they call a multimedia club. The Japanese architect Arata Isozaki designed an interior structure for the space to both contrast with and emphasize the 59-year-old theater's architectural detailing. Various young New York artists were invited to contribute as well.

"Iso likes to mix the old with the new," said Mr. Rubell, who explained that the rather dingy entrance on 14th Street was to be kept intact. Visitors enter a gleaming, high-ceilinged lobby, make their way past a Metropolitan Museum-like check room and up a huge stairway along labyrinthine, David Hockney-inspired dark blue carpeted halls before reaching the main dance floor.

On the dance floor, instead of flashing strobe lights and exposed bulbs, dancers will encounter a series of theatrical sets that can change the size and mood of the dance floor. A free-standing structure recreates an early Brooklyn nightclub; banks of 25 video television screens rotate and come up and down from the ceiling. Other space-changing elements include a Keith Haring backdrop, a wall with electric Venetian blinds and a volleyball net.

However, said Mr. Schrager, it is the artists who are making the



The New York Times/Bill

Some decorations in the Palladium Theater were kept and blended with designs, such as the staircase, above. At left, the stage sets on the dance floor.

rescent and mirror corridor in the basement between the lounges, as well as the fanciful telephone booths, water cooler, wall clock, fire hose and banquettes. Francesco Clemente's chapel-like vaulted ceiling space is at the top of the stairs; a 40-foot-long canvas by Jean-Michel Basquiat lines a wall of the 4,000-square-foot Mike Todd Room, a room decorated with crystal chandeliers and lace.

The main dance space is dominated by Mr. Isozaki's white windowed and arched structure encircled by an 800-seat balcony and mezzanines.

For those who don't want to dance, there are areas furnished with pillowed platforms and deep overstuffed sofas on which to lounge. "Many people like just to sit and hang out," Mr. Rubell said.

"The 70's were a mindless time that was not about sitting and talking."

## Judge Withholds Injunction

For the last five days, Steve Rubell and Ian Schrager fought in Manhattan Supreme Court to have the Palladium open on time. Yesterday, only hours before deadline, a judge gave them at least a partial victory.

The judge, Harold Baer Jr., denied motions seeking to enjoin the nightclub from opening on time. The motion had been filed by a Manhattan resident identified as Keith Billedeux, who argued that as convicted Federal felons, Mr. Rubell and Mr. Schrager were barred by law from obtaining a liquor license. Mr. Billedeux, who hired Jacob Fuchsberg, a former judge on the State Court of Appeals, to represent him, asked Judge Baer last week to stop the opening

and Mr. Schrager in 1979 for a violation, the State Liquor Authority refused to issue liquor licenses to the pair. However, the Muldallan decision, which is Palladium's case, was issued a liquor license for the 14th Street club in 1983, and that license is still in effect.

Thus far, the liquor authority refused to disclose the financial relationship between Mr. Rubell and Mr. Schrager, who describe themselves as consultants, not owners, of the club. Last week in court, Fuchsberg asked Judge Baer to examine the records privately to mine the true owners. Yesterday Judge told the authority to do so in 10 days the Muldallan and