

Del Mar Theater ready to reopen

By MARIA GAURA

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SANTA CRUZ — The Del Mar Theater, closed for more than a year due to earthquake damage, will open its doors again Dec. 21, according to a spokesman for United Artists Theater Circuit.

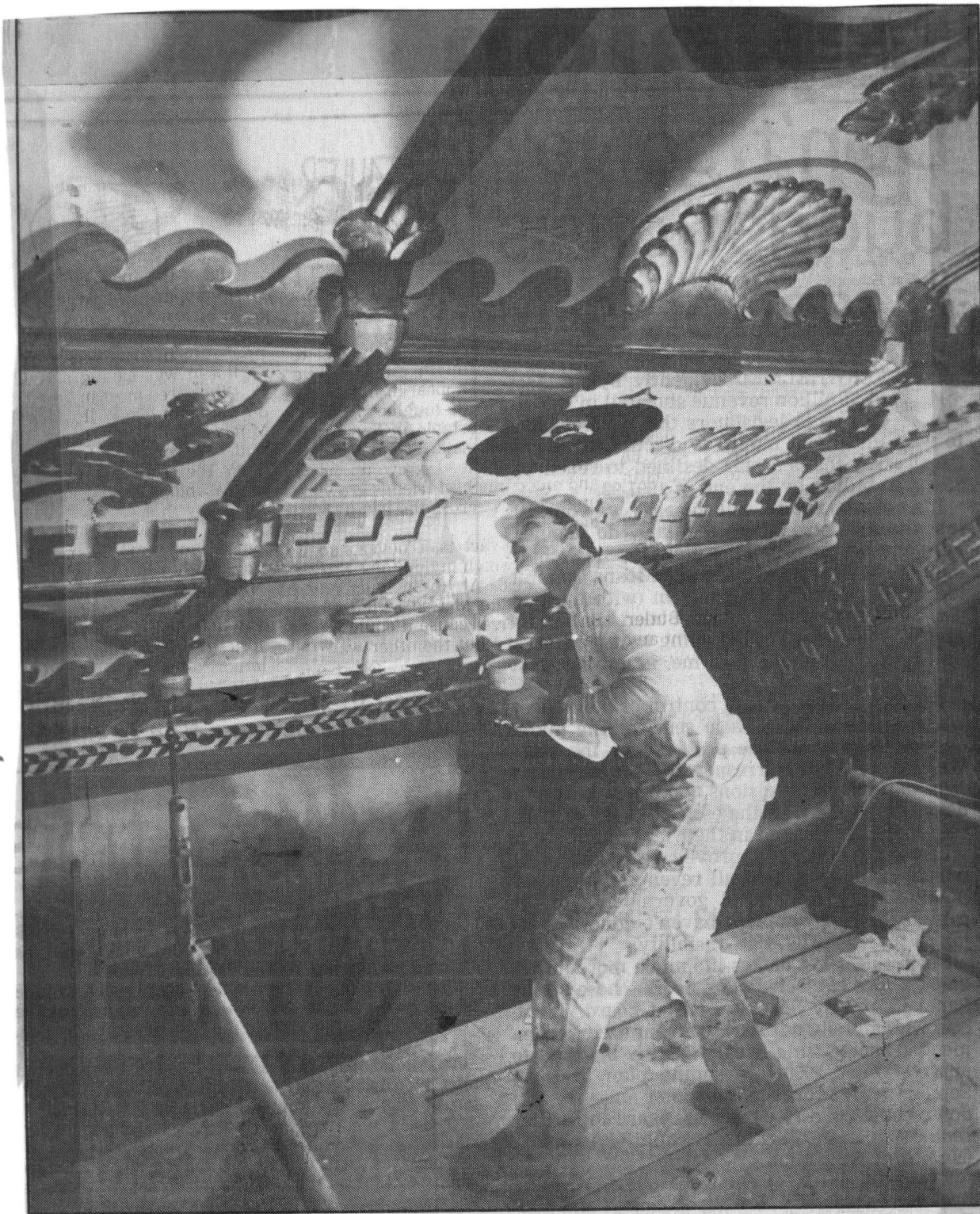
The number of screens and seats in the theater will remain the same as before the earthquake, according to Larry Levin, UA's general manager for Northern California. The historic Pacific Avenue theater, built by UA in 1937, was converted into a four-screen movie house in 1978.

Levin refused to discuss the amount of damage the Del Mar suffered in the quake, the restoration techniques used, the cost of repairs or the reason it has taken more than a year to complete the project.

But according to city building official Richard Stuebendorff, the Del Mar suffered relatively minor earthquake damage, with structural damage only to the

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Painter Randy Leininger inspects his work on the Del Mar's mezzanine ceiling.

Del Mar sets Dec. 21 reopening

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stage area and the roof of another business, the Hat Co., which shared the theater structure along with the Delmarette Fountain. The roof was damaged when bricks from the Acapulco Restaurant fell on it, Stubendorff said, and later examination showed the roof needed to be more firmly anchored to the building.

Otherwise, the theater suffered interior cracks and plaster damage but no major structural damage, he said. UA has chosen to restore the lavish, art deco

trim and figurines inside the building, Stubendorff said.

The building itself was constructed of steel-reinforced concrete, and "old as it is, it performed pretty well" during the earthquake, he said. The recent improvements should make the building even safer, he noted.

UA "took a long time to get rolling" on the repairs, Stubendorff said, but once the repair job began it progressed quickly. "They seemed to sit on their haunches for a long time," he said.

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