

## CUTLER MAJESTIC THEATRE

*Emerson College*

*Boston, Massachusetts*

*Client: Emerson College of Communications  
and the Performing Arts*



### AWARDS

*Honor Award, 2004  
National Trust for Historic Preservation*

*Honor Award, 2004  
Boston Society of Architects*

*Outstanding Restoration Project, 2004  
League of Historic American Theatres*

*Grand Prize, Building Modernization, 2004  
Buildings magazine*

*Outstanding Achievement in  
Lighting Design, 2004  
Illuminating Engineering Society of  
North America, New England Section*

*Outstanding Achievement in  
Preservation, 2003  
Massachusetts Historical Commission*

*Preservation Achievement Award, 2003  
Boston Preservation Alliance*

Constructed in 1903 as an opera house, the Cutler Majestic Theatre is a magnificent example of the classic Beaux Arts architectural style. In 1983 Emerson College acquired the badly deteriorated theatre as part of its long-term marketing plan to reposition the school's identity. The College selected Elkus Manfredi to restore the theatre to its original grandeur.

The challenge was to create a 21st century theatre inside a 20th century landmark. Modernization elements included upgrading the structure to current building codes, accessibility, and theatre system requirements; re-opening the second balcony; expanding lobby areas and seating capacity; and improving audience amenities. Restoration included painstakingly researching the original palette of the sumptuous interior; replicating seats, velvet curtains, and light fixtures; and re-creating custom wall coverings, paintings, and period carpeting. Boston's cultural community became deeply involved in the project, galvanized by Emerson's commitment.

The restored theatre has become an integral member of Boston's performing arts community and a crucial learning tool on the College campus, now relocated to Boston's theatre district. Most importantly, the Majestic's architectural significance has conferred new stature on the College itself. Elkus Manfredi's award-winning restoration is nationally recognized as a tour de force, and Emerson College the visionary institution behind it.



