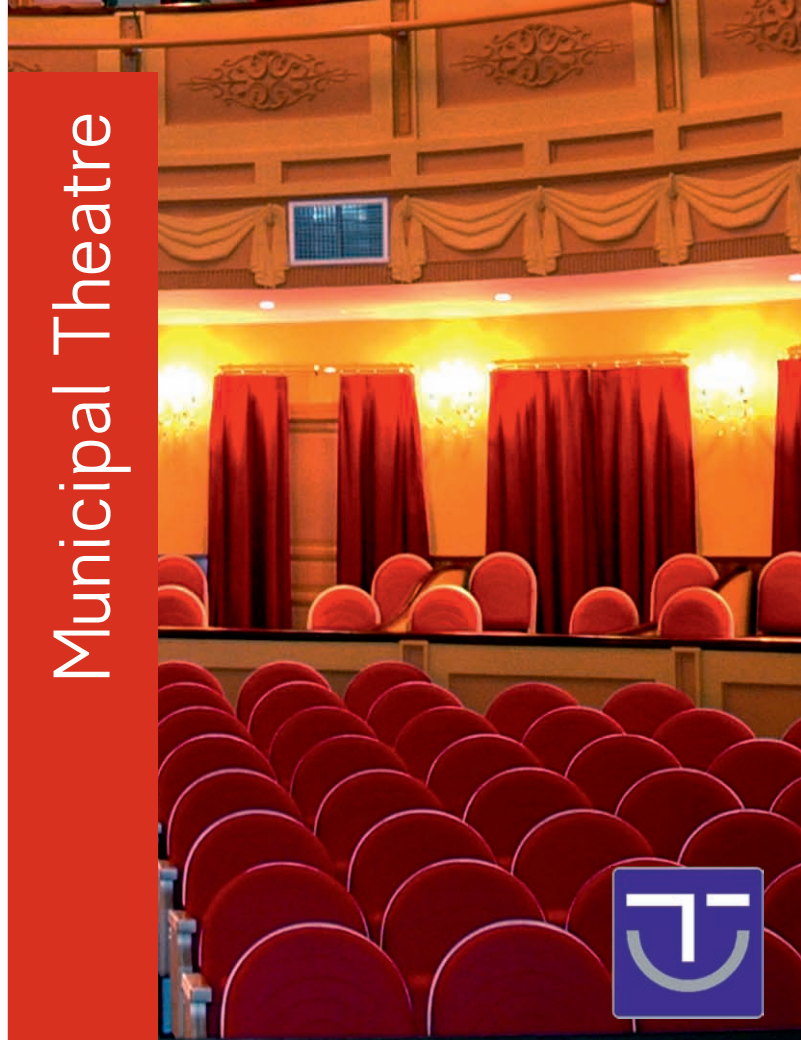


Municipal Theatre

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Building's history

During the mid-nineteenth century arose the need for a municipal theatre in Almagro. The reasons provided in the report sent in 1860 to the Minister for Home Affairs for the authorization of its construction, as an initiative of the City Council and a number of residents, argued the need of a theatre based on the new social and cultural demands of the population: "(...) useful for helping the youth understand the path of virtue and deviate them from corrupting practices, and necessary in this era of development of major improvements that lead to the embellishment and grandeur of the city (...)".

Almagro was following the trend initiated by the Madrid Court that requested the embellishment of the city as a sign of modernity in a time where the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie called for a more European image of the city and more detached from local traditions.

The architect in charge of the project was Cirilo Vara y Soria, who chose a neoclassical style in order to better adapt to the building's purpose. The theatre was located in San Agustín Street, on a site where a group of houses in ruin used to be. According to the architect's opinion, the lack of land was an inconvenience, since there were not enough room to build a public square, as in other theatres, to accommodate the audience and carriages and avoid the noise that may be heard from outside. Finally, he adapted it to the available land. The new theatre had a capacity of 800 seats and it was divided into three levels: the ground floor had separate entrances for the audience, actors and employees, and from the hall there was an access that led to elliptical-shaped stalls. Around the boxes appeared a passage of circulation giving access to the boxes, which had small windows as vents. On the first floor there was a rest room and a passage that led to eleven boxes. The second floor only had a balcony around the stalls, with seats extended over the grandstands, which eventually occupied the whole passage.

Its elliptical shape was chosen for acoustic reasons, reflecting a consistent sound as well as a better spatial use.

According to the architect, the interior decoration follows the purest Greco-Roman style with variations in accordance with proportions. The facade was designed according to the de-contextualized neoclassical style, following the predominant trend on Spanish public and institutional buildings at that time, which actually reveals its conservative nature favoured by the ruling class, the bourgeoisie.

The theatre had ongoing theatrical activities until the 1950s, when it started to be used as screening room. Towards the end of the 1970s, the deterioration of this building led its closure due to its ruinous state. The theatre was restored in 1989 by the famous architect Miguel Fisac. From then on, it was reopened to the public for the development of varied activities, especially theatrical ones. Its continued use made it necessary to carry out new restoration works in 2006.

A collection of puppets from Txirlora Association can be seen in the old buffet.

