



## El Tovar Theater

[Raue Center for the Arts](#)

26 North Williams

Built 1929

The Raue Center for the Arts started its life as the El Tovar theater opening in July 1929. It was designed by Elmer F. Behrns to be a state-of-the-art facility to feature “talkies.” It was designed as a Spanish Mission style theater with a façade of face brick, red terra cotta tile embellishments and stone archways. Minor changes to the façade include new doors and windows. The marquee was also renovated. All of these changes kept to the original style.

Elmer Behrns was a nationally known architect and a Crystal Lake resident. He designed the Chicago and Tivoli theaters in Chicago, the Arcada in St. Charles, and the Egyptian theater in DeKalb, among many other theaters and buildings in the area. His architecture style is significant for this area.

The El Tovar, then Lake Theater, and now Raue Center for the Arts, has been the site of many first dates, farewell kisses and gathering with friends. The theater has seen movies then live acts including Gene Autry. It is now home to world-class arts and entertainment programs with numerous live shows, plays, comedians, magicians and musicals throughout the year. It was due to the generosity of the Raue Family Estate that helped save this theater by purchasing and renovating it as the Raue Center for the Arts.