



Photo: GettyImages

The New York Times

NEW YORK DAY BY DAY

By Clyde Haberman and Laurie Johnston

Nov. 3, 1982

The Theaters Are Gone, But It's S.R.O. Anyway

"I was impressed" said one reviewer of yesterday's matinee at the Helen Hayes and the **Morosco**. "One of the better ones I've seen," said another.

"Explosive" might have been the final word.

Demolished they may be, but the two theaters are still pulling hefty crowds to Broadway. Several times a day, it is standing room only along the construction-site fence, where people stretch their lunch hours and coffee breaks to take in an explosion or two.

"As long as you're about as far away as that box is you're all right," said Ken Schnetzer, aligning himself with the detonator box in the pit below. As faces pressed closer, a crane lifted woven steel cable mats over the rock to protect the audience from errant debris. Two shrill whistle blasts and then the plunger was pushed. The mats rose in the air as though on the back of a huge beast. A muffled boom followed, then a rush of white smoke.

"They're so short," complained Howard Polner, a salesman, as he walked away.