

The Tampa Theatre – Keeping A Piece Of History Alive

By Karen McBride

The 1920's was a time when cars had cool names like the Ajax Nash, Flint and Rickenbacker. Styles were changing. Dresses became a little shorter and more fun with lighter, pastel shades. Bobbed hairstyles and chic hats completed the look. Men's suits were less tailored with baggy pants and oxford saddle shoes. This new, fun-loving era produced a population of movie goers. Tampa was a growing community and needed a place for people to go when they felt like putting on the Ritz and getting dolled up.



Popular movies like 42nd Street premiered at The Tampa Theatre

In 1926, the place for both young and old, the Tampa Theatre was built. John Eberson, a well-known theatre architect, envisioned an opulent Mediterranean style courtyard. Visitors could sit on red velvet seats in anticipation of the night to come. The pipes would bellow as the Wurlitzer organ rose from below the stage. Movie goers were entertained from the moment they walked through the door.

On October 15, 1926, movie goers anxiously waited in line to be one of the first to enter the new building. The silent film shown at the Tampa Theatre on Opening Night was "The Ace of Cads," starring Adolphe Menjou, the well-dressed lead actor with a waxed black moustache. His co-star was Alice Joyce. The cost was a mere 10

cents to be transported to another time and place.

As you enter the building, there is such a sense of elegance. Flowers and gargoyles surround you; colorful tile covers the floors and twinkling stars blanket the ceiling. The earlier movie goers must have felt like royalty as they were escorted by the uniformed ushers. If people had to leave before the movie ended, the ushers would communicate with other ushers by using the brass intercom to summon the next group. The group would then stay through the beginning of the movie to the point where they entered. It was a continuous revolving door.

Over the next several decades, numerous popular movies premiered including 42nd Street (1933) with Ruby Keeler, Dick Powell and Ginger Rogers; Shirley Temple's "The Littlest Rebel" (1936); Holiday Inn (1942) with Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire, Jerry Lewis in "Rock-a-Bye Baby" (1958) and The Postman Always Rings Twice (1981) with Jack Nicholson and Jessica Lange.

More recently, the theatre was the Tampa premiere for both "The King's Speech" (2010) and The Artist" (2011), and opened the Tampa exclusive for "Anna Karenina" this past November.

In addition to movies, the theatre has hosted a variety of entertainment. Annie Lennox,

Connick, Jr. Ray Charles, and Joan Baez are some of the performers to grace the stage. Political leaders (George Bush, Bob Dole, Jessie Jackson) and comedians (Roseanne Barr, Sinbad, Carrot Top) have all drawn crowds to the Tampa Theatre.

A long time crowd pleaser is the Wurlitzer, and the talented organist known as "the Queen of the Soaps." Rosa Rio provided accompaniments for soap operas prior to entertaining the people of Tampa. After studying piano at Oberlin College and organ at the Eastman School of Music, she began a career as a silent movie accompanist. After "talkies" began, her career turned to radio dramas, including "The Shadow" with Orson Welles. In addition to numerous soap operas, she played piano for Mary Martin while auditioning in Cole Porter's apartment in the Waldorf Astoria.

Her love of music and the Tampa Theatre was evident in the

fact that she continued to play the Mighty Wurlitzer, and at the age of 105 years old, provided accompaniment to Buster Keaton's silent film "One Wurlitzer. Rosa Rio passed away at the age of 107, but her music will live on. For a sample of her talent, watch this video from 2005, www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwGBEYPNmaA. Keep in mind she was 102 at the time.

The Tampa Theatre was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978, it is a Tampa City Landmark, and is a member of the League of Historic American Theatres. Managed by the non-profit Tampa Theatre Foundation, it is used for a variety of events including weddings, business meetings, classic movies, first run films, film festivals, concerts, field trips, summer camp programs, tours and fundraising galas.

Tampa Theatre offers a summer camp program, in collaboration with The Florida Center for

Expertise in Eyecare.



THOMAS J. PUSATERI, M.D. • LEONARD E. CORTELLI, M.D.
MARK L. AREY, M.D. • B. DAVID GARRUTO, M.D. • SCOTT M. FRIEDMAN, M.D.

Our ophthalmologists specialize in:

State of The Art Cataract Surgery • Pediatric Eye Care
Glaucoma Management • Medical & Surgical Retina Care • Lasik



Florida Eye Center

13602 N. 46th Street, Tampa, Florida 33613

813-972-4444 • Call for Appointment

www.flayeecenter.com

ASK ABOUT OUR HEARING SERVICES!

VISIT OUR OTHER LOCATIONS IN LAND O' LAKES & WESLEY CHAPEL.

PHARMACY

- Free Home Delivery
- Compounding Services



Scruples Pharmacy

1408 N. Dale Mabry Hwy., Lutz

813-948-8111

Instructional Technology at the USF College of Education. Students from 3rd to 12th grade are invited to participate in the one-week camp program. They will learn about scriptwriting, lighting, sound, filming and editing the work. Each group will create a 3-5 minute live action or stop motion animation film that will be shown to students and their parents at the end of the week. The filmmakers can go on stage to take their bows and pose for pictures. It's a fun-filled learning experience. Information on the 2013 summer camp program will be posted on the website in February.

One of the more popular events is Oscar Night America. Experience the thrills and excitement of the 84th Academy Awards® at Tampa Theatre. Officially sanctioned by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Oscar Night® America – Tampa Bay is Tampa's only benefit supported by the Academy and one of 50 such events nationwide. Admission includes a fun-filled evening featuring red

carpet festivities, delicious food samples, and exciting silent auction. Plus, free popcorn, soda and coffee throughout the show! All proceeds benefit Tampa Theatre's artistic and educational programs. This year the event will be held Sunday, February 24. Upon arrival, visitors ride in a limousine (that is parked around the corner) and get to walk the red carpet while the paparazzi line the entrance. Then they can watch the live telecast of the Academy Awards. Admission tickets start at \$30, see the website listed below for more information.

A free preview screening of the season premiere of "Downton Abbey," the popular PBS series, will be held on January 3 and an acoustic evening with Matisyahu on February 23. The Tampa Theatre is located at 711 N. Franklin Street in Tampa. For more information about upcoming events call 813-274-8981 or 813-274-8286 or go to www.tampatheatre.org.

There have been so many events that have taken place over the years

at the Tampa Theatre, from first dates to marriage proposals. Take the time to read some of the stories shared on the website, under Tampa Theatre Stories Project. We need to keep this piece of history alive, so that it can stay in the hearts and minds of future generations, too. When you are looking for something fun to do with your friends, get your glad rags on and head to the Tampa Theatre. It's the bees knees!



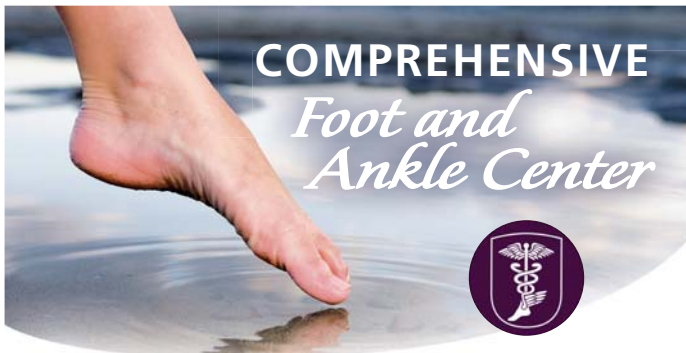
Employee Pricing
\$899 OFF INVOICE
with this ad



Call Robert Regan to schedule your appointment
813-244-9905

Visit www.wesleychapelnissan.com 

Offer is valid with Rober Regan. Not to be combined with any other specials and offers. One coupon per purchase



COMPREHENSIVE
Foot and Ankle Center



Dr. George Tjamaloukas,
FACFAS

Dr. Kathy Tjamaloukas,
FACCWS

Podiatric Foot and Ankle Surgeons
Board Certified Foot and Ankle Physicians


813-909-0865

Same Day Appointments.
Most Insurance Accepted.

www.cfacfootandankle.com

- Family Foot, Ankle and Leg Care
- Non-Healing Wounds
- Heel Pain
- Bunions, Hammertoes
- Foot and Ankle Reconstructive Surgery
- Childrens' Foot and Ankle Injuries
- Sports Medicine
- Ankle Injuries
- Foot and Ankle Fractures
- Diabetic Shoes
- Diabetic Foot Care
- Custom Orthotics
- Nail and Skin Conditions

2650 Narnia Way, Suite 101, Land O' Lakes, FL 34638
Located in Oakstead Professional Center, on S.R. 54



DIAMOND DENTAL

State of the art facility providing all phases of General & Cosmetic Dentistry, Implants & Invisalign/Braces

- ♦ Open Sundays
- ♦ Dental Services for Kids & Adults
- ♦ 24-Hour Emergency Service
- ♦ Walk-Ins Welcome
- ♦ Most Insurances Accepted
- ♦ Nitrous Oxide Sedation
- ♦ Early Mornings & Evenings Available

Invisalign/Braces • Veneers/Crowns • Bridges • Extractions
Dentures/Partials • Cleanings • Whitening • Root Canals • Implants

www.diamonddentalgroup.com

COUPON **COUPON**

\$99
NEW PATIENT EXAM
Includes Consult, Full Mouth X-ray & Pano,
a \$500 Value. (D0150; D0210; D0330)

With coupon, not valid with any other offers. Expires 1/31/13.

STRAIGHT TEETH
in 6 months
\$88 mo.
Must apply and qualify. Credit terms apply.

With coupon, not valid with any other offers. Expires 1/31/13.



PROVIDERS OF COSMETIC & IMPLANT DENTISTRY
A FAMILY PRACTICE

18869 SR 54 • Lutz, FL 33558

813-527-6900

The patient and any other person responsible for payment has a right to refuse to pay, cancel payment or be reimbursed for payment for another service, examination or treatment which is performed as a result of and within 72 hours of responding to the advertisement for the free, discounted, or reduced fee, service, examination or treatment.



Dr. Hillel Abramov



Visit Us On Facebook

