



Vintage cars line the street in front of the Redford Theatre.

Bill Vogel photo

Redford Theatre's Anniversary Gala

by Dorothy VanSteenkiste

The historic Redford Theatre, owned and operated by the Motor City Theatre Organ Society, returned to the 1928 opening night of the theatre with a Gala 60th Anniversary Celebration, September 16 and 17.

After months of preparation by Co-Chairmen Peggy Grimshaw and Donald Martin, and other committee members, to assure the audience a memorable evening, guests did return to the 20s and relived a bit of the past.

Theatre-goers arrived following the search lights in the sky. They drove up to be greeted by full uniformed doormen, gauntlets and all, with a Keystone Kop directing traffic. Vintage model cars lined the curb in front of the theatre, loaned by the Motor City Region of the Model A Restorer's Club, Inc. Arrangements for the cars were made by members Bill Vogel and Lynn Meeker.

Guests entered into a balloon-filled outer lobby with members dressed in colorful 20's attire. At the inner lobby



Tom FitzGerald and Marvin Spear.

Ray VanSteenkiste photo



(L to R) Jack Moelmann, Delores Malhoit, Bill Hart.

Ray VanSteenkiste photo

they were given "I Love The Historic Redford" pins and souvenir programs for the evening's performance.

The inner lobby and stage were beautifully decorated with silver metallic, star-shaped balloons, under the direction of Irene FitzGerald. Gigantic silver columns adorned the right side of the stage with 1928 and 1988 clearly visible through multi-colored metallic streamers and balloons, providing a breathtaking view.

Our President, Robert Duerr, was presented with a Michigan Historical Marker by Commissioner Jerry Roe of the Michigan History Commission on Friday night and it was presented on Saturday night by William M. Worden, Director of the Historic Designation Advisory Board of the City of Detroit. We were also presented with a Proclamation from the City of Detroit Council members.

Donald Lockwood, our master of ceremonies, reflected on the beginnings of the theatre back to the 20s and narrated a slide presentation prepared by Donald Martin.

Following a short introduction by emcee Donald Lockwood, we saw the first 1928 "sound" Mickey Mouse Cartoon *Steamboat Willie* through the courtesy of Buena Vista Pictures Distribution, Inc.

At this point Don turned the program over to Colonel Jack Moelmann, immediate past president of ATOS, who arrived on stage in a 1931 Ford Sports Roadster, with owner Sally Montroy at the wheel. Jack, looking quite dapper in straw hat and red and white stripes, greeted the audience and walked down to the organ where he entertained with songs of the 1928 era. Jack did a terrific job of getting the audience to join in a sing-along.

During intermission people had time to visit. For some, it had been years since they had seen each other.

The second half featured the silent film *The General*, starring Buster Keaton with Jack at the organ.

Jack closed the program with a "Tribute to America," playing patriotic songs accompanying a film on America's strategic land and air defense from the past to the present day. It was beautiful. Our American flag filled the stage, and the audience joined in the singing of the National Anthem.

We are preparing for the 1989 Convention and also the celebration of our 25th year as a chapter of ATOS. Our preservation and restoration work on the theatre continues, as well as work on the organ.

Other members of the committee were Norwood Martin, Harold Bellamy, Allen FitzGerald, Dorothy VanSteenkiste, Virginia Duerr, Sandy Krueger, Audrey Candeia, Margaret Tapler and all the other members who pitched in and helped.



Members of Motor City on stage at the Redford.

Bill Vogel photo



(L to R) Audrey Candeia, Ethel O'Leary, Terry Carmody, Jack Moelmann, Fran Carmody, Mary Przybylski, Brian Carmody kneeling.

Bill Vogel photo



Emcee Don Lockwood.

Ray VanSteenkiste photo