

New, anonymous cast enters the picture at State Theater

By MARK FRITZ, Gazette Staff Writer

The State Theater, an architectural gem that bombed in recent years as a money-making movie house, could soon have a new owner.

The new owner, however, will not be the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo. The Arts Council, which had been mulling whether it has the wherewithal to own and maintain the theater, has told Kalamazoo city commissioners that it does not.

But Arts Council chairwoman Alice Foote says that "another group" may be ready to buy the theater, with the Arts Council assisting it with fund-raising and program-development.

She said the interested group, which she would not identify, is a non-profit corporation in Kalamazoo. She and other members of a "Save the State Theater Committee" said the unnamed organization might make a pitch for the theater within a week.

The current owner, W.S. Butterfield Theaters Inc., announced plans to sell the 55-year-old theater early last year because it was unable to turn a profit. Butterfield stopped booking first-run movies there in February 1982.

Local arts groups and Kalamazoo city officials organized the Save The State committee last summer and began looking for ways to preserve the building at 404 S. Burdick, which is known for its intricate and elaborate architecture.

The Arts Council said it would agree to operate the theater if Kalamazoo city commissioners would sign an option-to-buy agreement with Butterfield. If the city signed the purchase agreement, under the plan, the Save the State Theater Committee would begin raising \$650,000 needed for the purchase price and some future operating costs.

Commissioners endorsed the plan in January with the stipulation that no city funds be used to

buy or operate the theater. They also suggested that the city buy the theater with funds raised by the theater committee, then deed the building to the Arts Council.

The Arts Council had asked the commission to defer acting on the option agreement while it studied whether it would be able to own the theater. Gordon Smith, who heads the Save the State Theater Committee, said in a letter to commissioners Monday that the Arts Council has determined that it wouldn't be able to own and maintain the theater. Smith is manager of Western Michigan University's Miller Auditorium.

"It was a decision of the board," Smith told the Gazette. "They (the Arts Council) didn't feel they had the resources. There are other entities that will be able to do that."

He said the fund drive will remain on hold until a prospective owner surfaces. He would not reveal the identity of any potential purchaser.

Smith would not elaborate on why the Arts Council decided not to seek title to the theater, but Mrs. Foote said the group wasn't interested in dealing with the physical plant aspects of owning the building.

She said that the board of the nonprofit corporation interested in owning the theater still "has to be fully apprised of it." If a deal is worked out, she said, she envisions the theater being run jointly by a steering committee of the Arts Council and the so-far anonymous organization.

Duwan Hunt, a member of the Save the State Theater Committee, said there are "several groups interested" in taking over the theater, but he would not name them. He said the Arts Council is still willing to help raise funds and to assist in planning programs for the theater.

Another Eberson theater saved, restored

Another John Eberson theater has been saved and restored to its former glory. Liza Minnelli played to a sold-out house of 1,569 with the grand re-opening of the Majestic Theater in Dallas, Tex., last week. Public funds of \$4 million and private donations of \$1 million saved and renovated the one-time vaudeville and movie theater created by the same, famed Chicago architect who designed Kalamazoo's State Theater. The Dallas Ballet will be the Majestic's chief tenant.

France treasures State-like theater

As Duwain Hunt and others continue their efforts to save the State, Kalamazoo's historic downtown "movie palace," another theater also designed by John Ebersson is celebrating its 50th anniversary as a national monument.

It's the Rex in Paris, France, which opened Dec. 8, 1932 and was hailed as the ultimate "cinema atmospheric." The Austrian-born Ebersson collaborated with French architect Auguste Bluysen in creating the theater where clouds swept across the auditorium's "sky" of twinkling stars — just as

they do in Kalamazoo's State. What the Rex had which the State didn't was the ability to alternate "tropical breezes" and "snow which fell on bared shoulders without chilling them"

The theater's anniversary caught the attention of Art Hilgart, an ardent Kalamazoo drama and film buff and president of the Civic Players who spotted a feature story in *Le Monde*, a Paris newspaper.

The story told how the "Grand Rex" has survived the ravages of time, is still a sumptuous if faded "magical palace" where its des-

ignation as a national monument inspired comparison of the theater to Thomas W. Lamb's San Francisco Fox (razed) and Henri Belloc's Gaumont Palace in Paris, also "liberated" by the wrecker's ball. It currently features dubbed Hollywood family and adventure movies and film festivals.

The Kalamazoo theater has been closed for about a year and is now used only for special events. Hunt is the moving force in efforts to have the city acquire the theater but thus far has won only moral support.

—Don W. Carlson



Lorber booked at the State

Jazz fusion artist Jeff Lorber, a versatile keyboard performer, composer and producer, visits Kalamazoo's historical State Theater for a show Tuesday, June 28 at 8 p.m. Tickets for the show go on sale tomorrow at Sunshine Submarine and Boogie Records, Kalamazoo. All seats, priced at \$8.50, are reserved. The show is being booked by Unlimited Entertainment, Inc. of Kalamazoo.

Christmas gala set for State

WHILE efforts to "save the State," Kalamazoo and western Michigan's last remaining movie palace, remain stuck on dead center, activities to raise funds to sustain the rescue will continue next month with a special program sponsored by the Southwest Michigan Theater Organ Club and State Theater Vaudeville Committee.

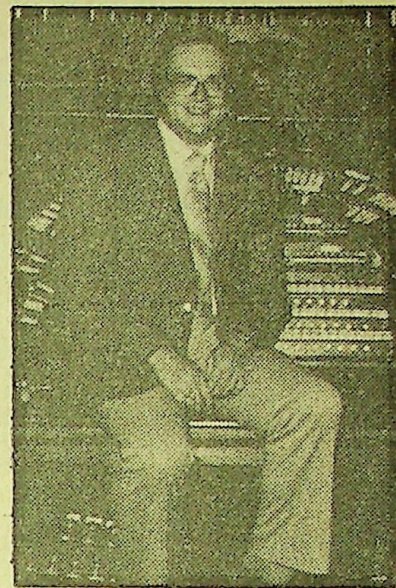
Planned for Dec. 18 is "a gala, old fashioned Christmas show" according to society president Ken Butela. The program will include a Christmas organ concert by Charlie Balogh of the "Roaring 20s" at Grand Rapids, songs by the Sing Out Kalamazoo group and organ accompaniment by Balogh for the Laurel and Hardy Christmas comedy silent, "Big Business."

Tickets purchased in advance are \$3 for adults and \$2 for students under 12 and senior citizens. They are on sale at the Keyboard Center, across from Southland Mall; Albright Music in Southland Mall, Midwest Music, Status Galleries in Kalamazoo Center, Stannard's Music, Treva Reed Music, Bach to Bach and Dillon's Music Center, or may be obtained by writing the State Theater Vaudeville Committee, P.O. Box 649, Comstock, Mi., 49041.

Tickets, priced at \$4, go on sale at the box office Dec. 18 at 2 p.m.

Butela said the program is intended to focus public attention on the importance of preserving this unique landmark. While it continues to be used sporadically for concerts and special events, no further progress has been reported in rescuing the theater.

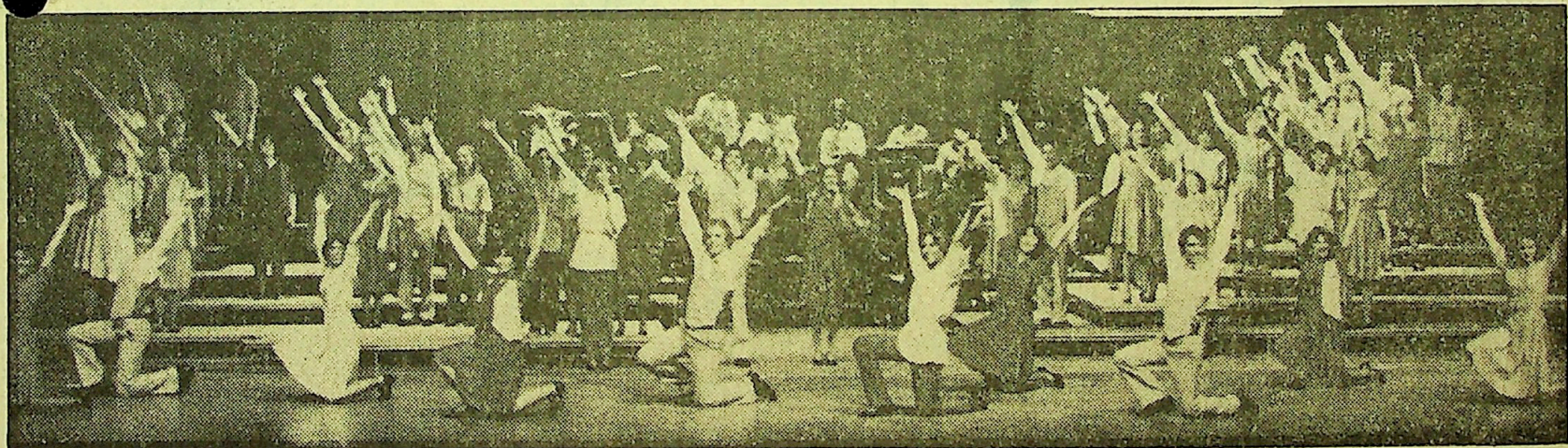
He also said membership "of anyone interested" is welcomed in the recently organized Southwestern Michigan Theater Organ Society. Membership is \$30 a year, \$20 of which goes to the national organization and includes a subscription to its national publication. The group has made trips to theater organ concerts in Chicago, Detroit and Ft. Wayne.



Charlie Balogh from 'Roaring 20s' to be featured on State Theater's Barton

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KALAMAZOO GAZETTE



Sing Out Kalamazoo joins Christmas gala at State

"Sing Out Kalamazoo" will help make for a festive, old-fashioned Christmas planned for Kalamazoo's downtown movie palace, the State, on Dec. 18 at 3. The singers will join in a Southwestern Michigan Chapter Theater Organ Club and State Theater Vaudeville Committee sponsored program that includes a Christmas music concert and sing-along by Charlie Balogh from the "Roaring 20s" of Grand Rapids at the theater's Barton organ. Balogh also will accompany the Laurel

and Hardy silent comedy, "Big Business." Tickets in advance at \$3 for adults, \$2 for students under 12 and senior citizens and are now on sale at the Keyboard Center, Albright Music, Midwest Music, Status Galleries, Stannard's Music, Treva Reed Music, Bach to Bach and Dillon Music Center or may be ordered from the State Theater Vaudeville Committee, P.O. Box 649, Comstock 49041. Tickets at the box office on day of performance will be \$4.

STATE THEATRE

AN OLD FASHION
CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 18th
SUNDAY-3:00pm

FEATURING

**SING OUT KALAMAZOO
& CHARLIE** *From the
Roaring 20's*

Take in the Holiday Festivities

**Reserve Your
Seats Now!**

Advance Tickets:
\$3.00-Gen. Adm.
**\$2.00-Senior Citizens,
Students**

All Tickets are \$4.00 at
the door ... If not sold out!

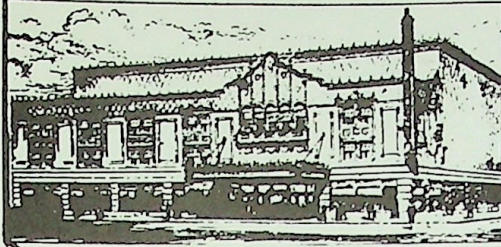


TICKETS ON SALE AT:
Keyboard Center
Albright Music
Midwest Music
Status Galleries
Stannard's Music
Trevia Reed Music
Bach To Bach
Don Dillon's Music



STATE THEATRE

Vaudeville Committee Presents



HALLOWEEN SHOW
PHANTOM OF THE
OPERA
OCTOBER 30th
3PM

AN OLD FASHION CHRISTMAS AT

SUNDAY-3:00pm
DECEMBER 18th

*Featuring Charlie
Balogh From the
Roaring 20's at
the Barton Organ*



*Sing Out
Kalamazoo*

the
State
Theatre



STATE THEATER CHRISTMAS SHOW

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18
3:00 PM

- Sing Out Kalamazoo — On Stage
- Laurel & Hardy Comedy Film
- Charlie Balogh and the Barton Pipe Organ

Tickets ... \$2 & \$3

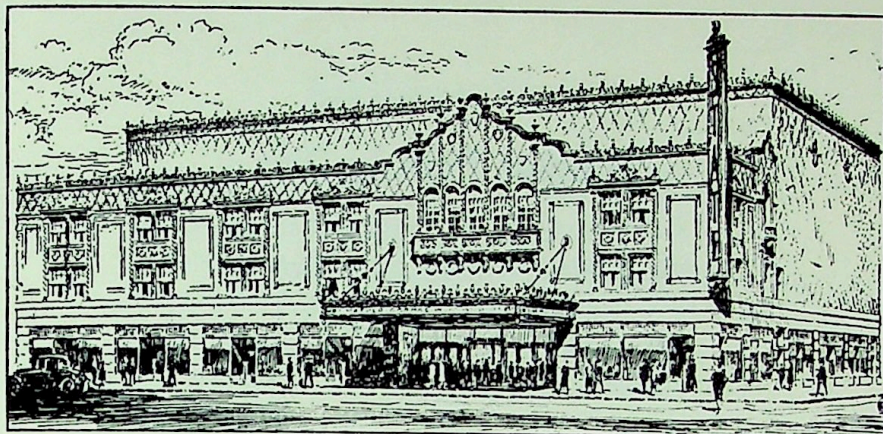
... Available at:

Keyboard Center, Albright Music, Midwest Music, Status Galleries, Stannard's Music, Treva Reed Music, Bach to Bach & Dillon's Music Center

Tickets \$4 day of show at box office

State Theatre

KALAMAZOO MICHIGAN



July 13th & 14th 1977

Harry Blackstone Jr.

7 Acts of Vaudeville

&

Charlie Chaplin

Film Classic

The "Gold Rush"

Accompanied by John Catherwood

At The Barton Organ

Jerry Raffel - M.C.

Special Thanks To:

Dorothy Dalton
Mr. & Mrs. William John Upjohn
New Vic Theatre



50th Anniversary Steering Committee

JERRY ALEXANDER
JEANNIE LYNN ALLEN
DUWAIN M. HUNT
RONALD LEE REISTERER

Advisory Board

Jim Bailey	Alexis A. Praus
James Brignall	Jerry Raffel
James Carver	Carol Roberts
Howard Chenery	Gordon Smith
Clyde Hinckley	Diane Smusz
Ted Kistler	Zack York
Bill Morris	



Production Staff

Managing Director Duwain M. Hunt
Music Director Don Dillon III
Choreographer Lindsey Canfield Thomas
Conductor Trent Kynaston
Costumier Jeffery Lieder
Consultant..... Jon O. Flegel
Stage Manager Greg Loftus
Rehearsal Pianist..... John Taggett

Program

Arrival of Performers

7:15 - 7:30 at the Front Door

Entertainment in the Lobby by the Mixed Blend

Overture - The 50th Anniversary Pit Orchestra

Introduction and Welcome

Jerry Raffel - Master of Ceremonies

Feature Film - *"The Gold Rush"*

Starring Charlie Chaplin

with John Catherwood accompanying on the Barton Organ



Intermission

15 minutes



"The Anniversary Babes" Chorus Line and Gene Keller
Irving Berlin's *"No Business Like Show Business"*

Gene Keller and a medley of Al Jolson Hits

"California Here I Come"

"Toot Toot Toosie"

"Rock Abye My Baby"

The White twins Robyn and Ronda with Gene

"I Wanna Be Loved By You"

A special presentation by the Vice President
of W.S. Butterfield Theatres, Inc.

Sue Desposato singing from SHOWBOAT
"Lovin That Man of Mine"

Lang Betha and Sarah Combs

"DeLovely"

from ANYTHING GOES

Weaver and Hurd comedy team performing
with fond memories of Abbot and Costello's

"Who's On First?"

Lindsey Canfield Thomas in a Solo Dance

"In The Mood"

Gina Ferraro on Roller Skates

"I'd Rather Be Blue"

from FUNNY GIRL

In the tradition of his father who performed several times
at the State Theatre we are proud to present
Harry Blackstone Jr. America's Foremost Magician

The Finale - The Entire Company

"The Charleston"

"Black Bottom"



Special Appearances by
Steve Miller, Jerry the Clown
Slowpoke and Company

"The Anniversary Babes" Chorus Line
Claire Waring, Lou Warner, Hollis Johnson, Gina Ferraro
Lillian Nunley, Jan Speers, Vikki Klobucher, Laurel Epstein
Shelley Beardslee, Diane Reynhout, Sarah Combs, Lisa Chew

Committees

Art work / Furniture Repair

Sue Horst
Randy Axline
Sue Hodapp
Sallie Smelker

Program and Tickets

John Bright
Jerry Alexander
Sarah Combs

Electrical Repairs

Emerson Smith
Ernie Downing

Ticket Sales

Jan Teale
W.S. Butterfield, Inc.
Gilmore Brothers

Make-up

Kalamazoo Theatrical
Make-up Company
Stanley Sparks

Costumes

Jeff Lieder
Ina Frank

Organ Restoration

William Mollema
John Catherwood

Projectionist

Lester Weiss

Reception & Cast Party

Lang Bethea

Production Crew

Gabriel P. Lopez
Genevieve Lopez
Dennis A. Siegert
Allison Sparks
Betty Darling
Jack Repp
Andrea Slater
Lang Bethea
Derald Kirkland
Dee Weese
Sarah Combs
Ron Dean
John Mihelich

Hosts & Hostesses

Members of Comstock
Community Theatre

Acknowledgements

Dean Webster Cars
Don Dillon's Music Center
Wolverine Press
Don Carlson
Jim Shamp
WKZO Radio & TV
Kalamazoo Public Museum
Shaw Theatre
Gilmore Brothers
Sen. Jack Welborn
The Army Reserve
Kalamazoo Dept. of Parks
Burnett Trucking
Ron Provost
The Kalamazoo Hilton

Kalamazoo Theatrical Stage
Employees Union
Howard Poth
Vern Sicotte
Joe Sterling
John C. Hawthorne
John Holt
John Vinkemulder
Nancy Blamer
Glenn Bishop
Downing Electric
Cenda MacLeod
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre
Burton Upjohn - Cars
Flipse Flowers
Thurman Bryant

