

DETROIT THEATER ORGAN SOCIETY

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

Senate Theater • 6424 Michigan Avenue • Detroit, MI 48210
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What's New?

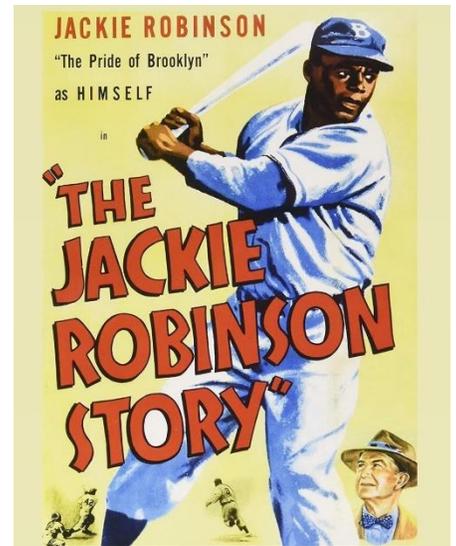
From the Movie Committee

"Watch Parties" Keep Patrons Connected and Elicit Donations During Pandemic

On March 7th, after hosting 139 people at our screening of King Kong, the movie committee was riding high. We had just come off a highly successful February where we saw nearly two hundred people attend the silent film *The Man Who Laughs* introducing many new people to our theater and organ. It seemed like we were well on our way to a highly profitable year, and we were excited for the upcoming schedule. Then Covid-19 hit, and all our plans came crashing down. On March 16, the governor ordered that gatherings be limited to 50 people, prompting the cancellation of our upcoming screening of Metropolis on March 21. As we tried to figure out what that might mean for our beloved theater going forward, one thing was clear: we had no idea how long it would be until we could reopen. There was no telling how long we would have to wait before we could see the friendly faces of our patrons or hear the nostalgic

strains of melody from our Mighty Wurlitzer wafting through the theater as we popped popcorn, chatted with friends, or prepared the projector room before showtime.

While we were all happy to do our part to stop the spread of this potentially deadly disease, we also knew that we could not just sit idly by. We had to do something, and within the first week of the shutdown, Nick Baldwin, (a movie fanatic, DTOS member, and digital native) came up with an idea. Just because we were all stuck inside our houses did not mean we could not continue to entertain our audience. Our movie program may have seemed broken, but we could rebuild it, we have the technology. It seemed that everyone, from local musicians to Hollywood movie stars, were taking to social media platforms to perform or just to reach out to their fans and followers as more and more people across the nation were

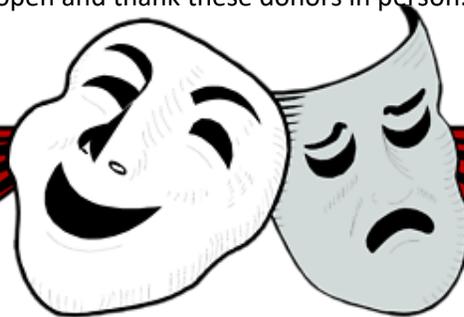




going on lockdown. And so, on March 21st, The Senate Watch Party was born, and we have been screening a wide variety of films every Saturday night at 8:00 pm ever since. Starting with a screening of several Fatty Arbuckle shorts, we moved on to the cult classic, *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, and have since played, among other selections, a classic horror film, a film noir, an Agatha Christie mystery, and a sports drama starring Jackie Robinson as himself. By no means are we attracting the same numbers of people we would have seen at the theater, but simply by remaining active online we are constantly reminding our customers that we are still here, even if we can't actually be *there* together.

Yes, our Watch Parties may be small, but the good news is that by attracting a small group of dedicated fans into our virtual cinema we have generated a great deal of goodwill. In turn, this goodwill has been transformed and returned to us in the form of generous donations. Each week, grateful patrons stuck at home, hungry for entertainment have taken it upon themselves to send us some of their hard-earned money. The money generated may not pay all the bills, but in these uncertain times any kind of donation is no small thing. It clearly shows how much our theater means to people, and for that we will always be grateful.

One day, and hopefully that day comes soon, we will be able to reopen and thank these donors in person.



Back Stage Happenings.

Work is continuing on the marquee as we speak. If you drive down Michigan avenue you can see our message that reminds everyone to stay safe during this virus pandemic. It then changes over to the American flag and finally to what you see in the picture. The next part is to install the side panels on either side of the entrance. Thanks to members President Lance Luce and Chris Dengate, soon the ugliness that was covered up by that old plastic siding will be enlightened with nice new panels.





Coming in 2020
TBD

We'd love to hear from you. Questions, Suggestions... We even take requests!!
Our Board of Directors are here to serve you. Email them at:

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