

## Portrait of America

Before malls and multiplexes, films were shown one at a time in opulent DOWNTOWN MOVIE THEATERS, like this historic Florida gem.



### Tampa Theatre

**WHEN** On October 15, 1926, this landmark screened its first picture, the silent *Ace of Cads*. Back then, tickets cost 10 cents apiece, ushers worked the rows of the 1,446-seat auditorium, and an organist charmed audiences on a Mighty Wurlitzer during intermission.

**WHAT** The theater—saved from demolition by historic preservationists nearly four decades ago—draws crowds to downtown Tampa with classic movie series, independent features, live concerts, even a filmmaking camp for local students. **WHY** “It’s a magical place,” says program director Tara Schroeder. “People in the community feel a real sense of stewardship for the theater. They’re proud of the fact that they can still bring their children and grandkids to the same spot where they watched their very first movie.” ([tampatheatre.org](http://tampatheatre.org))