

# ACT AND CAPITOL THEATRE HISTORY

- **Jan. 1927:** Capitol Theatre opens as renowned first-run silent movie/vaudeville house on Aberdeen's bustling Main Street. Theater includes introduction of premier golden-console Master-Kimball organ and Capitol Marquee is lit for the first time.
- **Jan 12, 1927:** As part of the Capitol Theatre grand opening events, "The Green Hat: A Play With a Punch!" was presented on the Capitol stage.
- **Jan. 13, 1927:** As part of the grand opening events, the silent movie "Kid Boots," starring Eddie Cantor and Clara Bow, was shown in the Capitol.
- **Jan. 19-20, 1927:** As part of the Capitol's grand opening, the Aberdeen American Legion presented the first community theater play, "Charm," on the new theater's stage.
- **May 1928:** Vita-Phone sound system installed in the Capitol, allowing showing of "talkies." This was first Vita-Phone system installed in South Dakota, and Aberdeen was second smallest city to get system.
- **Nov. 1930:** A fire occurs beginning on the back wall of the stage destroying the Master -Kimball organ and forcing extensive theater remodeling.
- **Summer 1980:** ACT 2, Inc. doing business as Aberdeen Community Theatre (ACT) was incorporated and produced its first two shows on Northern State University Johnson Fine Arts Center's stage.
- **Summer 1990:** Capitol Theatre shows last movie and closes when multiplex opens at Lakewood Mall.
- **1981-1992:** ACT as theater vagabonds did productions in many venues around the community.
- **May 1992:** ACT acquires Capitol as its permanent home.
- **May 1992:** Capitol Theatre Improvement Campaign Phase I begins to collect pledges to renovate the Capitol, which was in shambles.
- **May 1993:** ACT produces "Greater Tuna," its first production in the Capitol. Audiences sat in chairs borrowed from Aberdeen Convention Center.
- **May 1995:** ACT produces "Lost in Yonkers," first production in the remodeled auditorium with an enlarged stage, restored walls and new seats and carpeting.
- **May 1998:** Four-story CAPITOL sign and marquee relit after three Aberdeen Quester chapters combine forces to raise more than \$100,000 for renovations, now a nationally recognized historic landmark.
- **Oct. 1999:** Phase I of Capitol Theatre renovations completed. All loans, in excess of \$963,000, are paid.
- **Oct. 1999:** Season attendance sets a record of 10,000 patrons.
- **Jan. 2000:** Capitol Theatre Improvement Campaign Phase II begins to renovate essential support space.
- **Oct. 2001:** ACT's membership exceeds 1,500 people, compared to 276 in 1983.
- **Jan. 2002:** Handicapped-accessible public restrooms, backstage restrooms and dressing rooms are completed at a cost of more than \$187,000.
- **Oct. 2002:** Cumulative total volunteer hours since 1980 are more than 250,000 man-hours.
- **Jan. 2003:** Budgeted at \$125,000, installation of state-of-the-art theatrical lighting system is completed.
- **Feb. 2004:** A state-of-the-art sound system is installed throughout the Capitol facility at a cost of \$42,000. Hearing-assistance monitors are now available for all performances.
- **Feb. 2004:** Thanks to efforts of the three Aberdeen Quester chapters, six French art-deco (the classification of the Capitol interior) auditorium chandeliers were installed at a cost of more than \$62,000.
- **March 2005:** Make-up room, green room, Young People's Theatre programming room are completed.
- **Aug. 2005:** ACT celebrates its 25th anniversary season with "Annie Get Your Gun."
- **March 2006:** Scene shop renovations completed.
- **Jan. 2007:** ACT forms Capitol Cinema and begins raising funds to put film back in the Capitol.
- **2007:** ACT's "Honk!" received Outstanding Performance-3rd Place at National American Association of Community Theatre's festival in Charlotte, NC and is invited to 2008 international festival in Japan.
- **Sept. 2007:** Projector & film sound system installed. First South Dakota Film Festival (SDFF) produced.
- **Dec. 2007-March 2008:** Capitol Cinema screens Hollywood films on newly installed 35MM film equipment and new cinema quality sound system.
- **July 2008:** ACT takes "Honk!" to World Festival of Children's Performing Art in Toyama, Japan.
- **June 2009:** ACT's "How to Talk Minnesota: The Musical" advances through South Dakota & Region V American Association of Community Theatre festival cycle and performs at national festival.
- **Sept. 2007:** Film makes its official return to this historic 1926 movie palace with the screening of "Into the Wild" at the inaugural South Dakota Film Festival.
- **Winter 2007:** Capitol Cinema begins showing Hollywood films during ACT's off season, December through March, seven nights a week.
- **Sept. 2009:** Capitol Cinema's SDFF brings Kevin Costner to festival for "Dances With Wolves" retrospective celebrating the 20 years anniversary of filming the movie in South Dakota.
- **2010 - 2011:** ACT remodels theater lobby and Jane West Gallery (former concessions area).
- **2012** ACT remodels the lobby box office area and purchases the costume shop basement and receives the mezzanine area to begin remodeling for the prop shop.
- **2013** Installed state-of-the-art digital projector and showed first digital movies in Capitol Theatre.
- **2013** ACT begins raising funds for 90-seat digital theater that will show Hollywood movies year round.
- **2015** Construction begins on small digital theater.