

# GRAND MOVIE PALACE



Tampa Theatre is a protected historic landmark and one of America's best-preserved examples of grand movie palace architecture. Its mission is to protect, preserve and program the theater as a creative film and cultural center for our community. Tampa Theatre was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978, is a Tampa City Landmark, and is a proud member of the League of Historic American Theatres and the Art House Convergence.



## Educators

Share 100 words about how you used this resource in your classroom for a chance to **win a \$15 gift card and a \$200 Tampa Theatre membership for a year!** Visit [tampabay.com/nie](http://tampabay.com/nie) for details and to enter.



## GOING BEYOND *the* TEXT

### PRESERVING OUR COMMUNITY

The Center for the Study of Art and Architecture notes, "Architecture is considered a visual art like painting and sculpture. Architects design buildings using a creative process by which they manipulate art elements to create a unified and pleasing artistic statement." The design of a building, both interior and exterior, can be considered an art project.

Consider the aesthetics of the structure of Tampa Theatre. Are the aesthetics of the structure separate from the artistic elements of the building? Examine the photos in the gallery at [tampatheatre.org/about/gallery](http://tampatheatre.org/about/gallery). Free write about what you see. What images do you see? What images catch your attention? What artistic elements do you see? What architectural elements are there?

Look for photos and graphics of buildings in the *Tampa Bay Times*. Think about the structure and shape of these buildings. Free write about what you see. What images do you see? What images catch your attention? What artistic elements do you see? What architectural elements are there?

Compare and contrast the buildings in the newspaper to the architecture of Tampa Theatre.

### THE HISTORY OF FILM

The history of film begins in 1827, when the first still photograph was taken using a glass plate technique. From a still photograph on glass to moving images to flexible film, talkies and high-end computer graphics to IMAX three-dimension, 360-degree views, film has come a long way. In the era of silent movies, the theater organ was as important as the actors for the audience's experience.

Research the history of film and the evolution of cinema. Be sure to answer some of the following questions through your research.

- What important dates stand out in the history?
- Who were the important inventors and names in the film industry?
- What were the important inventions and developments?
- During which decades were important changes made?
- How did the incorporation of sound change the industry?
- How did technology (color process, animation, 3-D, IMAX) change the industry?

## Tampa Bay Times NIE

newspaper in education  
[tampabay.com/nie](http://tampabay.com/nie)

### Newspaper in Education

The Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education program (NIE) is a cooperative effort between schools and the

Times Publishing Co. to encourage the use of newspapers in print and electronic form as educational resources – a living textbook. Our educational resources fall into the category of informational text, a type of nonfiction text. The primary purpose of informational text is to convey information about the natural or social world.

NIE serves educators, students and families by providing schools with class sets of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Tampa Bay Times* plus award-winning original educational publications, teacher guides, lesson plans, educator workshops and many more resources – all at no cost to schools, teachers or families. In 2017-2018, NIE provided more than 1.5 million print copies and 10 million digital editions of the *Times* to area classrooms free of charge thanks to our generous subscribers and individual, corporate and foundation sponsors. NIE teaching materials cover a variety of subjects and are aligned to the Florida Standards.

For more information about NIE, visit [tampabay.com/nie](http://tampabay.com/nie), call 727-893-8138 or email [ordernie@tampabay.com](mailto:ordernie@tampabay.com). Follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/TBTimesNIE](https://twitter.com/TBTimesNIE).

### Florida Standards

The materials in this publication correlate to the following Florida Standards for middle and high school students.

**Music:** MU.612.H.1.1; MU.612.H.2.2; MU.612.H.2.3; MU.612.H.3.1; MU.612.H.3.2; MU.612.O.3.1  
**Science:** SC.612.CS-CS.6.2  
**Language Arts:** LAFS.612.L.1.1; LAFS.612.L.1.2; LAFS.612.L.2.3; LAFS.612.L.3.4; LAFS.612.L.3.5; LAFS.612.L.3.6; LAFS.612.RI.1.1; LAFS.612.RI.1.2; LAFS.612.RI.1.3; LAFS.612.RI.2.4; LAFS.612.RI.2.5; LAFS.612.RI.2.6; LAFS.612.RI.3.7; LAFS.612.RI.3.8; LAFS.612.RI.3.9; LAFS.612.SL.1.1; LAFS.612.SL.1.2; LAFS.612.SL.1.3; LAFS.612.SL.2.4; LAFS.612.SL.2.5; LAFS.612.SL.2.6; LAFS.612.W.1.1; LAFS.612.W.1.2; LAFS.612.W.1.3; LAFS.612.W.2.4; LAFS.612.W.2.5; LAFS.612.W.2.6; LAFS.612.W.3.7; LAFS.612.W.3.8; LAFS.612.W.3.9

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# THE PALACE IN THE HEART OF TAMPA



**TAMPATHEATRE**  
Welcome To The Show





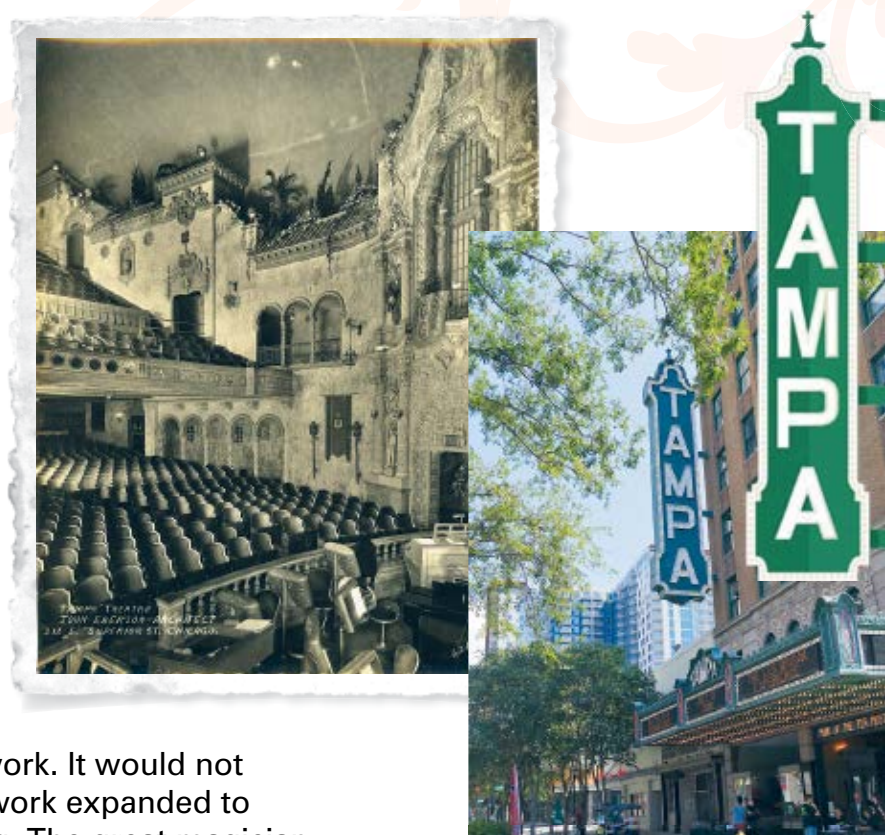
The year 1926 brought some important developments to the world.

It was the year that Robert Goddard launched the first successful liquid-fueled rocket, officially beginning the Space Age. In the Soviet Union, a major political development occurred with the expulsion of Leon Trotsky from the Soviet Politburo, the highest policy-making authority in the Soviet Union's Communist Party.

In the field of literature, A.A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh* was published. In the entertainment

world, the American broadcasting network NBC opened as a radio network. It would not be long before the network expanded to television programming. The great magician Harry Houdini died. This also was the year that American actor John Wayne made his on-screen debut.

And, in Tampa, Fla., one of America's most elaborate movie palaces opened its doors.



and the movie palaces that lit up America's main streets were further impacted by the advent of television. Audiences dwindled and costs rose. Many of our nation's finest movie palaces were demolished as the land beneath them became more valuable than the theater operations.

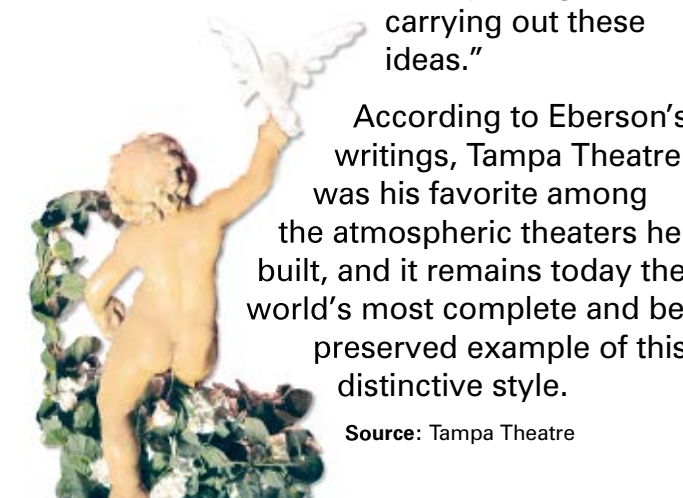
In 1973, Tampa Theatre was slated for demolition. But the citizens rallied, committees were formed, community leaders got involved and the City Council struck a deal to purchase and preserve the building. By the time Tampa Theatre reopened to the public in January 1977, it had become something of a national model for how to save an endangered theater. It was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978, and as a Tampa City Landmark when the designation was created in 1988.

Today, the movie palace is managed by the nonprofit Tampa Theatre Foundation and has become a remarkable success story. As one of the most heavily utilized venues of its kind in the country, Tampa Theatre's single auditorium hosts more than 600 events each year, including a full schedule of first-run and classic films, live concerts, special events, tours and educational programs. Since its rescue, the theater has welcomed more than 5 million visitors to downtown Tampa — including 1 million school children for field trips and summer camps — all within the context of one of Tampa's largest historic preservation projects.

### IT'S ALL ABOUT ATMOSPHERE

Tampa Theatre was designed by Chicago-based architect John Ebersson, one of the most internationally renowned and prolific movie palace designers of his time. It was built just three years into his atmospheric period – a style hallmarked by its realistic night sky, twinkling stars and ornate architecture designed to transport audiences to a moonlit courtyard, replete with clay-tile rooftops, old-world statuary, gargoyles, birds and flowering vines.

In a newspaper article in the *Tampa Tribune* that ran on Tampa Theatre's opening day, Ebersson described how Florida inspired his signature style: "I have been wintering in Florida for the past several years, and it is from this state that I got the atmospheric idea. I was impressed with the colorful scenes that greeted me at Miami, Palm Beach and Tampa. Visions of Italian gardens, Spanish patios, Persian shrines and French formal gardens flashed through my mind, and at once I directed my energies to carrying out these ideas."



According to Ebersson's writings, Tampa Theatre was his favorite among the atmospheric theaters he built, and it remains today the world's most complete and best-preserved example of this distinctive style.

Source: Tampa Theatre



### THE MIGHTY WURLITZER



at once," according to *Smithsonian Magazine*. "His instruments could produce numerous inventive sound effects, including train and boat whistles, car horns and bird whistles, and some could even simulate pistol shots, ringing phones, the sound of surf, horses' hooves, smashing pottery, thunder and rain."

Hope-Jones brought his expertise to the Rudolph Wurlitzer Co. in 1910.

Between 1911 and 1943, the Rudolph Wurlitzer Co.

built more than 2,000 theater organs. Most of these organs were small and built for neighborhood theaters. At first, silent films had been accompanied by a pit orchestra or, in some cases, a single piano. However, the theater organ brought innovation, with its ability to imitate an orchestra and create special sound effects, and every movie house owner had to have one.

The Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Organ is a 1,400-pipe instrument, originally installed to accompany silent films when the Tampa Theatre opened in 1926. As "talkies" took over in the early 1930s, the organ was retired and eventually sold to Bayshore Baptist Church. But in the 1980s, the theater enlisted the help of volunteers from the Central Florida Theatre Organ Society (CFTOS) to reacquire and reinstall the Mighty Wurlitzer in its original home.

CFTOS members continue to maintain the Mighty Wurlitzer and play the instrument before film screenings as part of their ongoing dedication to the preservation of the theater pipe organ and its music. Tampa Theatre also hosts a number of guest organists each year for concerts and special silent film events.

### RUDOLPH WURLITZER CO.

In the mid-1800s, British inventor and telephone engineer Robert Hope-Jones electrified the organ "and created a switching system to allow any combination of pipes and effects to be played

At its peak in 1926, Wurlitzer was shipping an organ a day. The company was mass-producing one of the most "technologically advanced machines of its time," according to *Smithsonian Magazine*. "The theater organ is related to the classic church pipe organ, whose basic design has been around for more than 2,000 years. Air blown through pipes, each tuned to create a different musical tone, creates the sound. Blowers located under the ranks, or sets of pipes, force air into them when valves are opened as the organist plays the keys and stops (tabs the organist flips up or down to activate different ranks of pipes)."

Source: Smithsonian Magazine



### TAMPA THEATRE

Designed by famed theater architect John Ebersson and built by Paramount Pictures, Tampa Theatre opened on Oct. 15, 1926.



Like other lavish downtown movie theaters around the country, Tampa Theatre was enormously popular when it opened. For 25 cents, the common person could escape into an opulent fantasyland cooled by "man-made air," enjoy first-class entertainment and be treated like royalty by platoons of uniformed ushers. For decades, Tampa Theatre remained a jewel at the center of the cultural landscape as generations of

patrons stole their first kisses in the balcony, followed the world through the newsreels and grew up coming to the theater week after week.

But by the 1950s, times had changed. The post-war flight to the suburbs was having a damaging effect on downtown businesses,

### GOING BEYOND the TEXT

**TECHNOLOGY AND ART** Motion pictures, and the way audiences view and experience them, have come a long way in the past century. Technological advancements continue to affect the world of entertainment as well as our lives. Look through the *Tampa Bay Times* to find articles, cartoons and advertisements that depict inventions or technological advancements that change the way we do things, from shopping to watching movies to communication and creating art. Make a list of all the items you find in the newspaper. Think about how your community and life would be different without these inventions. Explain in a blog post or journal entry how your life would be different without these inventions. Share your thoughts and ideas with your class.

## DID YOU KNOW?



The first reference to hydraulis-playing was in 90 BCE. According to the Westfield Center for Historical Keyboard Studies, "The instrument was introduced to Rome where Cicero, Lucretius and Petronius wrote of its powers. Nero didn't fiddle (the violin hadn't been invented yet!) but he is said to have played the hydraulis (perhaps even while Rome burned)."

## FIRST CENTURY BCE

Ctesibius, a Greek engineer working in Alexandria, invented the hydraulis, the first instrument where pipes that produce sound were placed on a chamber that stored wind. This wind, under pressure, was mechanically generated. A keyboard controlled the access of wind to the pipes. This musical instrument became known as the pipe organ.

## SECOND CENTURY CE

During the Roman period, a new development in the organ took place: Replacement of the pumps and water regulator of the hydraulis with a bellows. The bellows replaced two parts of the hydraulis:

- It provided the source of wind to the organ, replacing the pumps.
- It provided a means of controlling the wind pressure, replacing the water regulator.

## FIFTH CENTURY CE

Knowledge of the organ was lost in the west with the fall of the Roman Empire.

## EIGHTH CENTURY CE

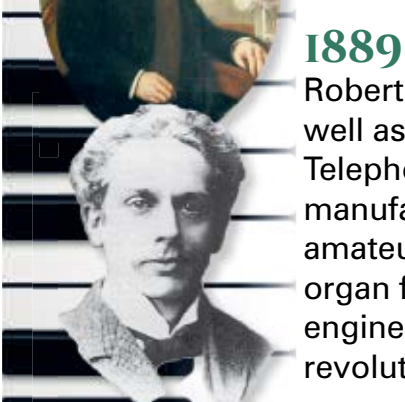
The organ was returned to the West as a gift from a ruler of the East.

## 1510-1520

A type of organ appeared in the upper Rhineland, which included almost all features to be found in present-day organs.



**1865**  
Rudolph Wurlitzer opened an organ factory in Chicago.



**1889**  
Robert Hope-Jones, a church organist as well as head electrician of the National Telephone Co., established an organ-manufacturing business. He was an amateur musician, having played the organ from an early age. He applied his engineering skills to developing a series of revolutionary revisions to the organ.

**1890**  
The Rudolph Wurlitzer Company was born.

**1904**  
Organs began to accompany silent films in movie theaters.

**1910**  
The Wurlitzer Co. acquired the Hope-Jones Organ Co. It was there, in 1911, that the pipe organ, known as the Unit Orchestra and later as the Mighty Wurlitzer, was developed. Organs were built with special sound effects designed for use in movie theatres to accompany silent films.

**1922**  
The first concert broadcast of organ music was made in New York.

**1924**  
The first Wurlitzer organ to arrive in Britain was installed in the Picture House, Walsall, in December.

**1927**  
The introduction of sound to American cinemas began, and the market for theater organs in the U.S.A. dried up overnight.

**COURT ORGANISTS**  
Mozart and Beethoven were both court organists, according to the Westfield Center for Historical Keyboard Studies. "Mozart's appointment came in 1779 to the court of Salzburg and Beethoven's in 1784 to the court of Elector Max Franz. These positions were ones of importance to the composers, the courts and the people of western Europe. Other famous composers who were organists: Handel, Mendelssohn, Liszt, Franck, Dvorak, Bruckner, Fauré, Ives and Messiaen."

Sources: James H. Cook; North East Theatre Organ Association; Encyclopaedia Britannica; Westfield Center for Historical Keyboard Studies

# the MIGHTY TAMPA THEATRE WURLITZER®



Sound: "mechanical radiant energy that is transmitted by longitudinal pressure waves in a material medium (such as air) and is the objective cause of hearing."  
- Merriam-Webster Dictionaries

## How the theater pipe organ works

When experiencing the magic of a theater pipe organ, audience members see the console by the stage and hear the music emanating from around the auditorium, but where exactly is the sound coming from?

The largest of the organs, such as the Wurlitzer, were installed in very complex manners. Various components of the organ were installed in different areas of the theater. The information below comes directly from the American Theatre Organ Society.

- **Console:** The organ console is the large keydesk at which the organist controls and plays the organ. Most commonly, it has two or three manuals, or keyboards, although some larger installations had as many as six keyboards. The keyboards are surrounded by a semicircle of stop tabs. There is also a large pedal board (a keyboard played with the feet) and many other buttons and pedals that control the swell shutters, effects and mechanics of the instrument. Typically, the console is located on a large lift mechanism, similar to an elevator, which allows the console to be raised for solo performances and lowered during the movie or when not in use.

## Shades and shoes

Walnut Hill Productions notes a theater organ's pipes are "enclosed behind movable wooden or metal motor-driven shutters, known as 'swell shades.' This is so that their loudness can be controlled, from whisper quiet to earth-shaking loud. These shutters are placed at the front of the rooms full of pipes, otherwise known as the 'chambers.' The pipes of a theater pipe organ have to be placed in as little space as possible." This is a main difference between theater pipe organs and church pipe organs.

Pipes in the organ play at full volume, so the only way to control the volume is with the pedals, located below the manual. These pedals are called swell shoes. As the organist pushes the swell shoes down, the swell shades open, and more sound is let out. Each pipe has its own pedal.

Source: Walnut Hill Productions

## DID YOU KNOW?

The various components of the theater pipe organ are often at a large distance from one another; therefore, they must be connected by miles of electrical wiring and lengthy wind lines. The 56-rank Wurlitzer in New York's Radio City Music Hall -- the largest original Wurlitzer installation -- has more electrical wiring in that theater organ than in all the rest of Rockefeller Center, according to the publicity department.

## Electricity + air = beautiful music

Electricity supplies the keys, stops and air blowers in the theater organ. Air from a large duct at the output of the blower is enclosed in the wooden boxes called regulators. These regulators have coil-spring-loaded lids on leather bellows and are connected through smaller ducts to more wooden boxes, called chests, that have the pipes fitted into holes in their tops. The regulators keep the air under even pressure.

Each pipe has a valve that opens when a note is played by a key that has that set of pipes turned on by a stop tongue, one of the many multicolored control switches surrounding the keyboards of the console.

The keys and stops, along with all the valves for the pipes, are connected together by a device known as a relay, which puts the signals from the controls

- **Relay:** The relay is the brains of the organ. The relay takes electrical signals from the console, generated whenever keys are depressed or stops are changed, and directs the correct pipes and/or traps to instantly sound.
- **Blower:** The blower is the large fan that provides the pressurized air which will blow through the pipes. It also provides air to operate the mechanical devices which "play" the pneumatically operated instruments, or traps. Pressurized air also is used to perform other mechanical tasks, such as the operation of the swell shutters and the registration pistons that automatically change many stops at the press of a button.
- **Windchest:** The windchest is a wooden reservoir that contains pressurized air from the blower. Valves in the windchest are opened and closed remotely by the relay to cause the correct pipes to sound when the organist depresses the keys.
- **Pipes:** A set of pipes that produces the same distinctive sound from the lowest to highest note is known as a rank of pipes. Most ranks contain 61 or 73 pipes. Small theater pipe organs could have as few as three or four ranks of pipes, and the largest instruments had more than 50

## Families of tone

There are four basic families of pipes:

- 1 The diapasons - foundational voice, big, warm and mellow
- 2 The tibias - made of wood and flutes made of metal
- 3 The reeds - trumpets, oboes, clarinets and various horns
- 4 The strings - a zingy and spatial tone, such as the violin and cello

Source: Walnut Hill Productions

ranks. In actual numbers of pipes, a small instrument might have 100-300 pipes, while the largest instruments contained 10 times that number. The highest-sounding pipes are smaller than a pencil. The lowest bass pipes in large instruments are about 32 feet in length and wide enough to allow a person to stand inside a pipe.

- **Traps and toy counter:** Authentic percussion instruments such as piano, xylophone and orchestra bells are located in the pipe chambers. These instruments are played from the keys of the organ and made to sound by way of pneumatic action. Separate beaters or hammers are located above each metal or wooden bar on the pitched percussion instruments. Pneumatic action also controls the hammers that strike the strings of a real piano in the pipe chamber. Snare drum, bass drum, cymbals and other percussion instruments are activated in the same manner. Sound effects such as siren, automobile horn and train whistle are all sounded from the organ console.

Source: American Theatre Organ Society

## Rank and file

A theater pipe organ can have thousands of pipes of all different kinds, which are arranged in ranks, from small to large. Each rank has one or more stops that turn it on or off. According to Walnut Hill Productions, organs are noted by two numbers, such as 3/16 or 4/32. "The first number signifies how many manuals, or keyboards, are in the console. The second number signifies how many different ranks of pipes are in the organ."

Source: Walnut Hill Productions



and keys in the right places at the right time.

According to Walnut Hill Productions, "The musician presses a stop tongue down. This sends a signal to the relay, which opens the stop valve for that set of pipes. He or she then presses a key, causing the relay to send a signal to open a pipe valve, allowing air to blow into the pipe for that key. The air causes a vibration in the pipe, and a note comes out into the room."

Source: Walnut Hill Productions

## GOING BEYOND the TEXT

### SPECIAL WORDS

Jargon is defined as "special words or expressions that are used by a particular profession or group and are difficult for others to understand." For example, the fields of law, medicine and sports are full of jargon. The professional worlds of theater and music are no different. Terms such as "swell shoes," "pedals," "chambers," even "ranks" and "consoles" have specific meanings. Interpreting the meaning of these words can be challenging for readers. Most new vocabulary words are learned from context clues or good old-fashioned dictionary work. While you read this publication, be sure to highlight or circle words you don't know. Try to figure out the words' meanings by looking for clues in the sentences around them. Write down your best guess, and then look up the words in a dictionary. As a group activity, make a list of the words your classmates identified and

see which ones stumped the class. Next, use these words for a news scavenger hunt and see if you can find these words in the Tampa Bay Times. The group that finds the most words wins the game.

### SOUND AND VISION

In *Psychology Today*, David M. Greenberg, Ph.D. writes, "Music is essential to many of our lives. We listen to it when waking up, while in transit, at work, and with our friends. For many, music is like a constant companion. It can bring us joy and motivate us, accompany us through difficult times, and alleviate our worries." Greenberg notes that music has been "a feature of every known human society. In fact, many evolutionary psychologists today make the argument that music predated language."

When music through the Mighty Wurlitzer was added to silent films, that music became the thread between the audience and the film. The music conveyed pathos, ethos and logos. Imagine the musical soundtrack of your world. What would that sound like? Write a paragraph exploring your ideas as to how the Wurlitzer could provide others with insight into your thoughts and feelings instead of using words.

Next, in a small group, create a video to illustrate a news or feature story from the Tampa Bay Times. Instead of using words to indicate what is happening in the article, choose music or sounds that could be played to accompany the video you have created. Share the video with your class. Upload the videos to YouTube and send the links to [ordernie@tampabay.com](mailto:ordernie@tampabay.com), subject line Tampa Theatre Project.

### MARKETING 101

It is Oct. 1, 1926, and in 14 days the new Tampa Theatre is going to open its doors for the very first time. You are the marketing director, and you need to make sure the seats are filled for opening night. Create a marketing campaign. Be sure to think of ways to include promotion through the Tampa Bay Times. Share your marketing campaign with your class.

### PRESENTING AN ARGUMENT

In 1973, Tampa Theatre was slated for demolition. Tampa citizens got together to prevent that from happening: Committees were formed, community leaders got involved, and the City Council struck a deal to purchase and preserve the building. Using this publication, the Internet and the Tampa Bay Times,

do some research about the history of Tampa during the 1970s. Write an argument for or against demolishing Tampa Theatre. Be sure to back up your points with some specific examples. Share what you have learned with your class.

