



The Eden Palais

PHOTO: SANFILIPPO FOUNDATION

PHOTO: LINDA M. BARRETT

Sanfilippo Foundation's Halloween Silent Film Gala and Fundraiser

THE THEATER ORGANIST'S JOB is not only to accompany a silent film seamlessly, but, like a magician, to magically disappear before your eyes as the on-screen story takes over.

Such it is, at the Sanfilippo Foundation's annual Halloween Silent Film Gala, where over 300 guests tour the Sanfilippo family Collection of Automatic Music Instruments, then experience a black and white silent film with a World Class Organist on the 8,000 pipe Mighty Wurlitzer Organ. The Gala assists the Sanfilippo Foundation in hosting and helping dozens of charities raise, in total annually, over a million dollars, with more than \$13 million in the last nine years.

Encouraging guests to come in period costume, the evening moves from the Sanfilippo home after the silent film to the carousel pavilion, where an elegant dinner party brings guests the enjoyment of a great Parisian dining experience with the Foundation's 1890 French Carousel, the

Eden Palais, as the backdrop. A traveling salon carousel, it moved around France and Northern Europe from 1890 up through 1959, ended up in Colorado, then in Montana for nearly 30 years, and now resides, fully restored, in the Sanfilippo pavilion for guests to marvel at its beauty, and enjoy a ride.

The guests were also surprised with entertainment during dinner by DanceWerks Midwest Dance Collective of Barrington, directed by Ellen Werksman. Appearing in red vampire costumes, then steam-punk outfits, and finally in French dance line dress, the students performed three dances, including to the French Can-Can played on one of the Sanfilippo Band Organs—the largest band organ Wurlitzer built. This kicked off guests' dancing to local, live band Paris Swing for a fun-filled evening. There was even a surprise marriage proposal on the carousel this year.

"For our supporters, donors, and sponsors, this event showcases the Sanfilippo Collection

while educating them on our mission of leveraging opportunity and donations for dozens of charities annually," said Jeffrey Sanfilippo, son of Marian and Jasper Sanfilippo. "The Gala is immersive in the 1920s period visually, and with the music from our Automatic Music Instruments, the silent movie, dancers, and a live band, guests really get into the spirit of it all," Sanfilippo said. Prizes were given out for best costumes.

The Sanfilippo Foundation offers opportunities for local, regional, and national charities that assist children and families, health and human services, and arts and culture. Its mission supports a greater understanding of how working together, community can benefit in a variety of ways. The Foundation also acts as a consultant on charity best practices. 

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Greg Leifel is the executive director of the Sanfilippo Foundation. To learn more, visit www.Sanfilippo-Foundation.org.