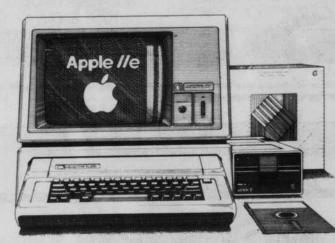
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# Center's birthday shows enthusiam. community spirit

By Angela Allen Morgan Of the Emerald

For a one-year-old, the turnout was impressive.

The Hult Center for the Performing Art's celebrated its first birthday Saturday night, and about

2,500 people — dressed to the hilt — helped celebrate. For several hours, the sell-out audience was high on community spirit, though there was little doubt that the indefatiguable Pearl Bailey revved up any civic chauvinism that might have flagged over the past year. Bailey led the audience in the traditional Happy Birthday song and later asked to be invited back "for the Hult's second, the third, even its 20th birthday."

At least on this first anniversary night, the glitter and gleam of red roses, purple balloons and Silva Stage dancing left all doubts behind about the survival and cultural investment of Eugene's performing arts center. And for an institution still wet behind the ears, the Hult has had its traumas - among them:

 The \$360,000 operating deficit projected for the next five years.

-The squabbling over the center's name (Hult) and the centre's name (Eugene Centre).

-The taxpayer-financed Sunriver retreat that the Hult management took earlier this

Pride and Pearl, though, were more appropriate than politics. Before the Broadway star and the virtuoso Louie Bellson quartet took center stage, Eugene Mayor Gus Keller presented three Eugene Arts & Letters Awards. The

awards recently were established by Hester and Lee Bishop to "honor the persons and or organizations, past and present, who have contributed to the enrichment of Eugene's cultural life through their involvement in the arts and letters."

And honored they were.

The first went to "theater tradition" Ed Ragozzino, who has directed and produced more than 110 community performances that have been instrumental in contributing funds, spirit and drive to the creation of the Performing

H. Royce Saltzman received the second award. Saltzman is best known in Eugene and Springfield as the founder and executive director of the internationally recognized Oregon Bach Festival, which Eugene has hosted for 13

The 54-year-old Very Little Theatre was the final recipient. The theatre, which netted a whopping \$4.51 during its humble opening performance in 1929, has operated without income from state, federal, local or foundation

Keller commended it for "serving as a source of pleasure and wonder in its presentation o dramatic productions in the best tradition of community theatre."

University Theatre giant Horace Robinson and Lawrence Maves, former conductor of the Eugene Symphony Orchestra and the University's orchestra, were honored last year in the first Eugene Arts & Letters Awards.

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