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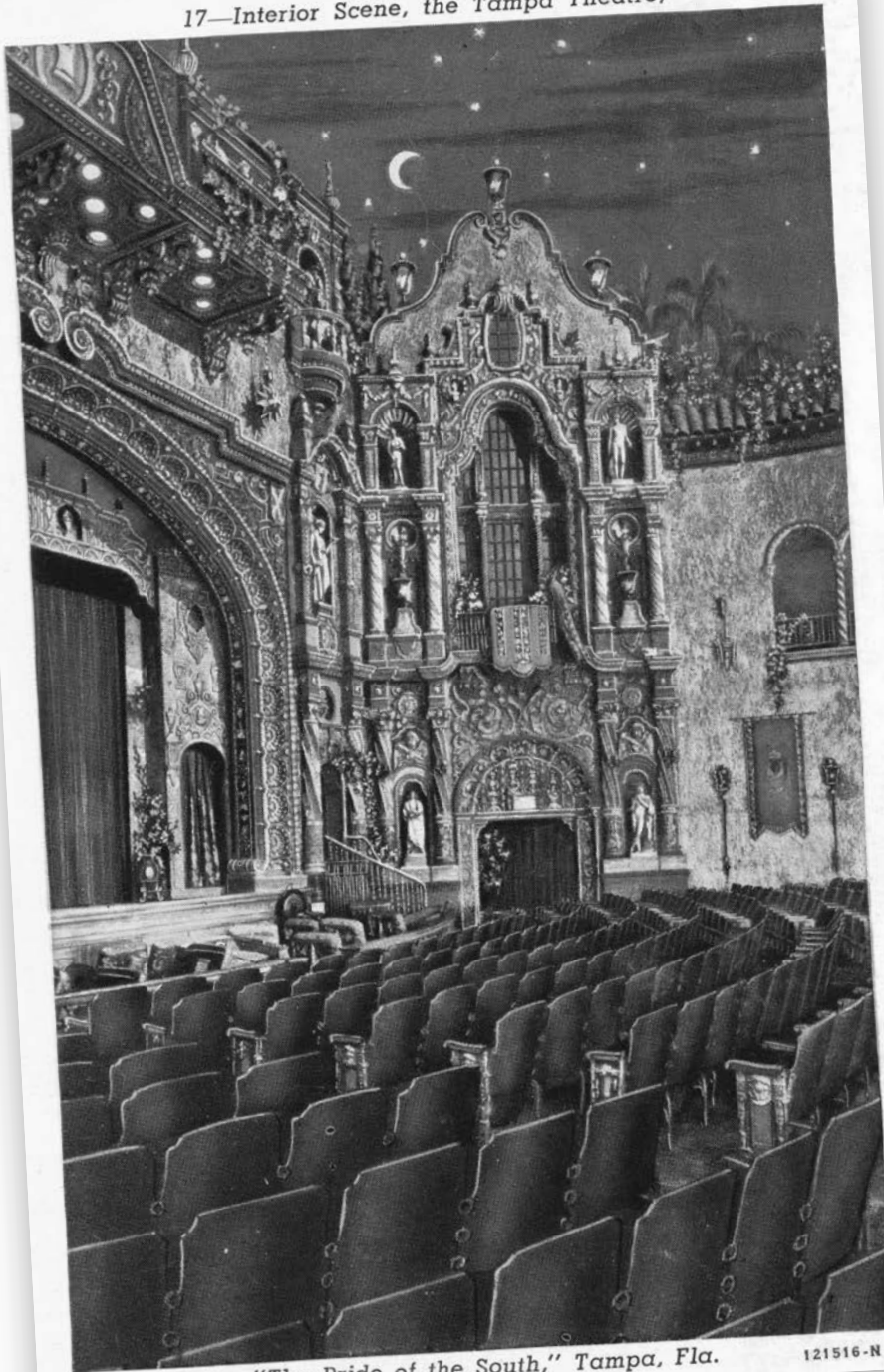
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"The Pride of the South," Tampa, Fla.

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Tampa Theatre postcard
(Weiler Collection)

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On the cover: The Rudolph Wurlitzer Manufacturing Company had an aggressive marketing strategy and seldom missed an opportunity to ballyhoo their pipe organ installations. The Tampa Theatre and the Olympia in Miami will be familiar names to those attending the recent convention in Florida.

Advertisements such as this one appeared in Motion Picture News, and Exhibitor's Herald-World. (Weiler Collection)

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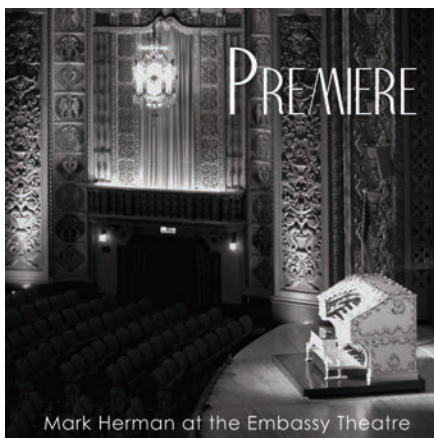
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Vox Humana

THEATRE ORGAN

has been given a new look,
feel, direction and vision.

Its purpose, however,
remains unchanged—
to document the interests
and accomplishments of
our society and its members.

At its least, it is our legacy.

At its very best, it is our
inspiration.

Readers familiar with the magazine will notice a number of new departments, but not to the exclusion of those which have become favorites over our half-century history. Several departments from former days have been reintroduced, such as “Vox Pops” first created by editor Stu Green. We encourage members to contribute items of news beyond those generally found in “Chapter Notes.” Technical columns will again appear to assist the would-be restorer in the pursuit of perfection. Edward Millington Stout, III lends his irascible wit and insight to “Professional Perspectives.” “In the Spotlight” tracks the progress of theatre pipe organ projects. Large and small bear equal importance. “Theatre Organ Interviews” gives us the opportunity to better know influential figures in our little community and appreciate their insights and achievements. One of ATOS’ greatest assets is its archive, located in Joliet, Illinois. It brims with recordings, ephemera and artifacts patiently awaiting study. In “From the Archives,” we’ll have an opportunity to prospect the collection and share in discovery. We hope to encourage the use of the ATOS Archive as a valuable resource for research and education.

As ATOS moves forward, it seems only appropriate to consider our past. There has always been a great deal of interest in the players of the theatre organ, but often the instruments themselves have been cast in a subordinate role. As long as the organ made some degree of tremulated sound, listeners appeared pleased. While it seems obvious that fine music-making cannot occur without equally fine instruments, we hope to re-examine ways by which we can advance the cause of the theatre pipe organ. These instruments are historic cultural trusts. They are rare, valuable, and merit serious consideration in and of themselves. When faced with their restoration and care, we have an opportunity to lead by example, holding ourselves to higher standards than ever before.

We hope you will enjoy what you find in these pages, and we shall always endeavor to meet the needs of our readers. We welcome your comment.

— Jeff Weiler, Editor

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Letters

FROM THE READERS...

Tampa Rates High

I have just returned from Tampa, Florida, and the 51st annual convention of the American Theatre Organ Society. As a surviving founder member from 1955, I feel privileged to make public my reaction.

Firstly, them Floridians were gangbusters! They done good! There were artists and venues galore to tickle our fancies, and we were tickled. The bus transport seemed to be firmly nailed, right down to a newt's eyelash; real smooth. Everything copacetic all the way around. Hey, y'all, do it again.

Our opening day preglow, the 24th, took us to Brantley High, where we found the artist, and instrument, admirably suited.

On the 25th, there was a workshop. Then we went to the Tampa Theatre, where we found Wily Walt at the Wurlitzer. His frantic console congress is mesmerizing; he's ALL over the place, but he makes great music. Lord, his keyboard work is THE most! Good on you, SON.

The 26th, at Grace Baptist, was the *pièce de résistance*. That was the day we really lived. The Earlybird Eyeopener was provided by that Mighty Mandarin of the Mesa, Lew Williams. He indulges us with everything

from longhair to "In the Mood," and all with complete competence. Way to go, Lew.

Moving on, we were given the royal treatment by the two young organists, David Gray and Donnie Rankin. Each was spectacular, and deserving of much more space than this. We are assured that the theatre organ will live on, and in competent hands.

Our somewhat late nooner was none other than Richard Hills, of whom, I dare say, there is no peer. When thinking of Richard, I'm always reminded of Simon's piece, "Sketch of a Dandy." In my mind, I picture Richard all gussied up, strolling the Strand, bowler and broly en pointe. But about his music, the New Moon medley was to die for! Panting, I just made it down from the chandelier.

Our cocktail time entertainer was His Elegance, Jelani Eddington. His musical offerings stand out, as they're always underpinned with a certain elegant flair, an *éclat*, a *je ne sais quoi*. Like, I want to say. It's all GREAT STUFF. Way to go, ArJay!

About now, timewise, we were worn down to a nub, and needed a wee drap, and a comfortable chair.

The next day, the 27th, was our group's turn for the Roaring 20s Pizza. This is a great place, not large, but adequate for the purpose of presenting theatre organ, with all its accoutrements. The traps and percussions were randomly placed around the walls, and lit when played. Bill Vlasik played a real good pizza time organ.

That evening found us at the Polk Theatre, with Clark Wilson at the Morton. He cued the Buster Keaton movie, *The Cameraman*, and what a smooth job he did. His playing for a funny flick was a standout.

Day the 28th. First came the annual meeting, followed by Russell Holmes. I'd forgotten how good he is; I need to get out his floppy for the Allen and give another listen. It's been a few years since he rededicated the refurbished Hawaii Theatre in Honolulu. Saw my first talkie there. It was Warner Baxter in *In Old Arizona*.

After lunch, Rosa Rio cued the film, *Beyond the Rocks*, and did a wonderful job. Her accompaniment was rather spare, but it fit well into the plot and proved very satisfying. She's a real trooper, a precious lady!

DIRECTOR'S CORNER... BY DONNA PARKER

I am honored to serve on the ATOS board once again. Our organization celebrated 50 years in 2005, and there is much work to accomplish as we begin our next 50 years. The national board is moving forward in a positive, progressive way to help ATOS thrive, not just survive. The ideas are vibrant, the exchanges are energy-filled, and out of the fire will come golden results. Change is never easy, but we have our sleeves rolled up and are already hard at work. We are committed to fine tune a clear vision and plan of action for our future with regard to all facets of this all-American art

form, including artists, technicians, venues, marketing, and education, while preserving our rich heritage. The board of directors is accessible and open to communications from our membership, so let us hear from you. Remember, we are ATOS members too, and we return to the membership ranks once we serve our term(s) of office. There is no "them" and "us" between the board and membership—we're all in this together! I look forward to a productive term and can't wait to begin to share some of the new programs and ideas with you.





“Them Floridians were gangbusters!
They done good! There were artists and
venues galore to tickle our fancies,
and we were tickled.”

After our dinner, it became Ron Rhodes’ turn on the bench. He has a fine individual style, identifiable, and great to listen to. He can lay on the 16s when needed, pedal to the metal, or lead us into quiet, reflective stops. I quite enjoy his playing.

On Memorial Day, we started out with Walt on the Allen for about an hour. Then it became our turn for the Kirk of Dunedin. I found this a most unusual place, with a rather odd console, and Daliesque fretwork in front of the shutters. Donna Parker, gracious lady that she is, did her usual upbeat program, assisted at one point by Jelani. I can’t be clear about that; my age said I was due for downtime, and I drifted off for a bit. At home, I have to stand up during the news, or I’ll miss most of it.

For the afterglow, we went to the Milhaus Museum in Boca Raton; what a mind-blowing place! Within the walls were a carousel, large mechanical music machines, a restored service station of the 20s, many makes of autos, a digital Walker organ, a Wurlitzer, and I don’t know what all. Being there was an adventure.

On to Miami, and the Olympia Theatre, with its 1925 3/15 Wurlitzer, all intact. Not too many of these installations around. Our artist was Good Jonas, The Impeccable, and only one of a kind. He plays fast “because I can,” and his fingers blur on those 64th notes! It was Jonas [Nordwall] in his best form, playing right on through a loud cipher. He spoke of the Trio (Tom [Hazleton], Donna and himself), and he and Donna did a little recreation of days gone by. A finer performance was not to be found.

I can’t allow this to end without giving kudos—three rousing Banzais, actually—to our wonderful MC, Ken Double, who kept us all on our toes. Land o’Goshen, that feller

sure is a talker, ain’t he? By the way, he can play plenty good organ besides.

If you’ve stuck with me this long, please hang on, for I want to take you on an adventure. Because of a well-executed heist—no further detail available—I’ve obtained a potion from Hogwarts, which enables very brief visits to the Upper Grande Organ Room, with the gold Fox Special console, where we may find our friends. Come.

Upon entry, we immediately spy Eddie Dunsteder, gin and Rose’s lime at hand. In a far corner, a shining jewel identifies Korla Pandit. My friend, Jack Kirk, with Erwin Yeo, passes by. At the console, Ashley and Tom take their turns, to the delight of all. George, unmindful of his manners, again goes at Ev Nurse about his missing Musette. Fela Sowandie passes by. Looking about the room, we see Torch, Buddy Cole and Quentin MacLean. I think I see Jimmy Paulin, and there’s June Melandy. Drat, the time is running out, and here comes the “dissolve to white.” I just get a glimpse of W. Oliphant Chuckerbutty. Oh, Lord, it’s over, and we’re back down.

I’d love to use my favorite Texas expression here, but the Editor probably wouldn’t allow it. I must fall back on a direct quote from George, which sums it all up, the whole megilla: HOW UTTERLY ROCOCO!!

Love y’all. Be safe and well. Toodle, as usual.

— Frank Bindt
Walnut Creek, California

Pipe vs. Digital

I have not been closely following the recent theatreorgans-I threads regarding pipe vs. digital [organs] however I just want to toss a perspective into the melting pot.

I am what many of you would consider a “pipe person” (as quoted by a theatreorgans-I member in reference to those of us who promote the preservation of such instruments). I do have an analog Rodgers 333 in my house and I love playing it like I love life itself—but my house isn’t big enough for a Unit Orchestra and I can live with the electronic substitute. I am in the engineering phase of installing a two-manual, five-rank pipe organ which will operate on 3" of wind and consist of a Diapason, Gedeckt, Salicional, Voix Celeste, and Vox Humana. The instrument will be placed in a 4'4" by 6'4" chamber with an 8' ceiling. The bottom of the 8' Diapason and the 16' Bourdon will be exposed in the atrium into which the chamber will speak. There is also a reed organ in the great room and there will be a Hammond and a Baldwin Orgasonic in the garage just for fun.

The concern we “pipe people” have about digital organs isn’t realism, or lack thereof, or what people do with them inside their homes. Our primary concern is that too many Unit Orchestras are being modified and altered beyond recognition by digital “augmentations,” and many venues which may be candidates for Unit Orchestras in the future are perfectly happy with their digital instrument and, in a sense, find themselves spoiled by the extra manuals, large specification, ease of maintenance, etc. The digital instruments, components, and solid state relays are

Letters

playing a large part in the future of preserving an artifact. For me, personally, it always boils down to the question of “Is this morally acceptable?”

Part of the art of theatre organ is the medium which produces the sound—much like part of the painter’s portrait is determined by the paint he uses. Would you rather paint a portrait of that beautiful sunrise you see every morning with oil, acrylic, or watercolor? Or would you rather construct the image of the sunrise in AutoCad, Corel, or even Microsoft Paint? Both painting by hand and painting by computer can create beautiful effects and pleasing results, but can you really touch the canvas and feel the texture when it’s been painted digitally? Is a print-out really as good as the actual canvas?

The digital organ is doing more to promote the art of playing the theatre organ since we are able to play on the semi-realism of the good samples, but, as a colleague recently reminded me, it is unfortunately creating a generation of “button pushers.” We must have 90 pistons on the console along with gadgets, gismos, and a MIDI sound module triumphantly resting atop the console lid to make the organ into something which it is not. A few years ago, I posted an e-mail to theatreorgans-l regarding making the most out of any organ you have to play. I still believe that beautiful music can be made out of an original Style D just as much as it can be made from an original Publix 1 with no generals (as if there are many left in original condition).

Another argument we “pipe people” can pose is creating new interest in the theatre organ when you have, for example, a 12-year-old standing beside the console. You push the car horn and the funny ah-ooh-gah comes out of the chamber. Now, can you take this 12-year-old into the chamber to see the ahh-ooh-gah horn or not? When the 12-year-old finally sees the chamber, do you think a bunch of speakers pointed in odd directions are going to be impressive to his or her memory? If the 12-year-old can not play the organ, there is only the intimidation of the keyboards, hundreds of tabs, and 90 pistons all over the piston slips. The mechanical interest of the pipe organ as a living, breathing being is what hooks

children and adults alike. A 12-year-old may not be able to play the organ, but he or she does enjoy pushing a primary on the percussions or low CCC of the Tuba. There may even be a simple job where the 12-year-old can help out and feel a sense of accomplishment at a chapter work-day. There simply must be a mechanical interest to coincide with the musical interest to create a true, new enthusiast!

Before we start asking theatreorgans-l list members to leave the list over the tired pipe/digital argument, please take a moment to think about our concerns as “pipe people.” Digital instruments are wonderful for practice, they suit homes very well, and they provide an outlet for younger organists to try new things and play around outside of a formal performance venue—but we need to stop it there! We can not let digital augmentation and digital instruments negatively influence the uncertain direction the American Theatre Organ Society will take within the next few years. At present, the preservation of our precious few remaining Unit Orchestras is a very unstable subject and I feel that the pipe/digital argument should simply take a back seat to preserving the instruments which act as a genuine medium for artists to paint their musical portrait. Our sunrise was painted for us long ago by an ambitious group of American Theatre Organ Enthusiasts—are we beginning to paint our own sunset?

— Kevin R. Cartwright
Atlanta, Georgia

New York Speaks Out

Since the plans for the 2007 Annual Convention to be held in New York City were announced at this year’s Annual Convention in Tampa, there have been many questions raised about the reasons behind the New York Chapter’s decision not to participate in the event. Because of this, many of us on the board of directors of the New York Chapter (New York Theatre Organ Society, NYTOS) feel that it is necessary for the complete story to be told, so that other chapters in our organization may better understand our position.

The events begin back in July 2005, when the NYTOS board of directors met for one of our regularly scheduled board meetings. During the course of discussion for new business, Mr. Nelson Page, then a NYTOS board member as well as a member of the ATOS board of directors, mentioned that ATOS was planning on hosting a “Tri-State” annual convention to take place during the 4th of July weekend of 2007. It would be a “multi-state” event, involving venues in New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania and perhaps New York City. The convention was to be headquartered in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and unlike previous annual conventions, this event would be sponsored by ATOS themselves, with no local “host” chapter. NYTOS was asked if we might be able to hold a single “afterglow” concert at LIU, where NYTOS would be able to charge for admission and keep the profits from the gate. We all agreed that, if the LIU Wurlitzer was ready in time and the repairs were completed (the organ is currently being restored from water damage) and if we could clear the date with the University, we would try to do it.

After our July board meeting, nothing was mentioned to NYTOS again about the 2007 convention until our first board of directors meeting this year, held on January 14, 2006. At this meeting, Mr. Nelson Page told the NYTOS board that “because they were able to get a great hotel rate in NYC,” ATOS decided to change the location of the 2007 Convention to the Marriott Marquis Hotel in Times Square. NYTOS was offered no financial share of the convention however, other than the commission proceeds from the operation of the convention gift shop. After some discussion about the initial plans proposed by ATOS, the NYTOS board formed an ad hoc committee to research this idea further. We concluded the meeting by asking Mr. Page when ATOS would need to know if NYTOS was agreeable to participating in this event. He told us that he would need to know within 90 days in order for ATOS to proceed with the hotel contract with Marriott.

To make sure that we decided within the 90 days, the NYTOS board scheduled its next meeting for April 1, 2006. At that meeting, a lengthy discussion ensued with

“There have been many questions raised about the reasons behind the New York Chapter’s decision not to participate in the event.”

many of our board members expressing their concern about the lack of venues. The Beacon Theatre was not to be included, nor was Rev. Ike’s United Palace. The Beacon Wurlitzer, although playable, would not be accessible for maintenance, and the Robert-Morton at Rev. Ike’s was in need of a complete restoration. And, Long Island University’s Wurlitzer in Brooklyn was undergoing restoration from water damage. In addition, two of our upstate venues, the Bardavon Opera House in Poughkeepsie, New York and the New York Military Academy in Cornwall, New York, would not be available during the summer.

Because of the problem with the obvious lack of venues, and because the NYTOS board wanted to consider hosting our own New York City “weekend” or “regional” convention in the fall of 2008 incorporating the Radio City Christmas Show, a vote was taken, with the majority of our board members opposed to the idea of having a convention in New York City during the summer of 2007. By the terms of the Uniform Chapter Charter Agreement (UCCA) between ATOS and the chapters, which states, “ATOS shall not sponsor any activity in a Chapter’s operational area unless the parties mutually agree,” the NYTOS board vote should have stopped the convention plans from going forward. It did not, for reasons that all of us on the NYTOS board did not fully understand at the time.

As chairman of the NYTOS board, I informed the then president of ATOS, Fr. Gus Franklin, of our decision, and asked that ATOS cancel its plans for 2007. Fr. Gus informed me that they refused to cancel their plans and would proceed regardless of our vote. NYTOS engaged an attorney, and we threatened an injunction based on the Chapter Charter terms previously stated. Only then did it become clear as to why ATOS did not want to cancel their plans. NYTOS obtained a copy of the hotel contract with Marriott: It was already signed

and executed on December 2, 2005 by an ATOS representative, Mr. Mike Kinerk, over a month before Mr. Page told us of the idea of having the convention in New York City at our January 14th board meeting. The 90-day timeframe by which NYTOS had to decide to participate was not even relevant. ATOS had already decided to go ahead with or without NYTOS.

Naturally, everyone on the NYTOS board was upset about this flagrant dishonesty from our “parent” organization. Realizing that ATOS could not afford the large cancellation penalty from Marriott (over \$100,000), your board drew up terms for a settlement to allow ATOS to proceed without our involvement. These terms are as follows:

- NYTOS receives \$5,000 up-front from ATOS, plus 30% of whatever profits are realized from the convention.
- NYTOS members may attend any convention event in our territory at no charge by presenting a valid NYTOS membership card. This includes the planned concert at Radio City Music Hall.
- ATOS will not refer to the 2007 event as a “New York” convention.
- ATOS will provide a disclaimer in all printed materials for the convention stating that NYTOS is not involved as a sponsor of the convention.
- NYTOS will receive an additional \$2,000 for preparing and readying the NYTOS-owned organs in the Middletown Paramount in Middletown, New York and the Lafayette Theatre in Suffern, New York.
- The Wurlitzer at Long Island University will not be scheduled for use for the convention due to the unknown status of the University’s plan for rebuilding the rest of the organ and the annual refinishing of the gym floors scheduled for its normal time in late June.

In early June, we received ATOS’ \$5,000 check as well as the settlement document with the terms above signed by Fr. Gus Franklin, the now past-president of ATOS. So, the 2007 convention will go on, without the direct involvement of the New York Chapter.

Although all of us on the NYTOS board of directors who opposed the plan for ATOS to do a convention in our territory in 2007 would have preferred ATOS to cancel completely, the entire board is unanimous now in stating that we are satisfied with the settlement that we negotiated with them. In addition, we have been told that many on the new ATOS board of directors who took office last month in Tampa, Florida, are sorry for the way that NYTOS was treated, and are anxious to build a more positive relationship with the chapters. As the New York Chapter Chairman, I welcome that message and look for better things from ATOS in the future.

— Dave Kopp, Chairman
New York Theatre Organ Society

Letters to the Editor: Written commentary regarding any aspect of this publication is encouraged, and should be directed to the Editor. Letters may be published in whole or in part, and the Editorial Office reserves the right to accept, reject, or edit any and all letters. The opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are solely those of the author, not those of the American Theatre Organ Society. Letters may be submitted to weiler@atos.org, or mailed to Jeff Weiler, THEATRE ORGAN Editorial Office, 1845 South Michigan Avenue #1905, Chicago, IL 60616.

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HELPFUL INFORMATION FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

RENEW EARLY—Your member ID# and expiration date are on the mail label for THEATRE ORGAN. You may receive a renewal notice after you send in your renewal. Please avoid sending duplicate payments. I can best respond to your questions or concerns with a phone call or e-mail if I have your contact information. We do not release member telephone numbers with any information list.

ASCAP—ATOS will pay all ASCAP fees related to any chapter-sponsored theatre organ event that is open to the public. Please use the convenient form located on our web site at: www.atos.org/Pages/ASCAPform.shtml. Please submit this form immediately following any public concert. I'll be happy to mail forms to you on request.

OFFICERS—Please be sure to notify us of any changes so that we may keep accurate and up-to-date records in our office and on the web site. If you e-mail this information, please include our Web Site Manager, as he will need to make the changes on our web site.

ADDRESS CHANGES—The only way we can be sure to get publications, ballots and other mailings to the right place is to have accurate information in our mailing database. Please contact us with any changes. If you routinely change your location, you may choose to elect the \$15 First Class mail option and have your THEATRE ORGAN forwarded to your alternate address.

MEMBERSHIP LISTS—Lists are sent to the designated chapter "membership" contact by request. Please contact me if you need a copy.

BROCHURES—ATOS membership brochures are available from this office. Please contact me and I'll be happy to send you a supply.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS—In an effort to save on postage costs and keep dues down, ATOS membership cards are mailed four times per year via the bulk-mail system. If you have a special need or request, please contact me.

WEB JOURNAL—Please keep the Web Site Manager informed of any special events or happenings in your area by submitting information for publication in the on-line ATOS Web Journal. www.atos.org/Pages/WebJournalform.shtml

CALENDAR OF EVENTS—Please use the convenient form on our web site for submitting information to be published in THEATRE ORGAN and on the ATOS Web-site. This is provided free of charge. www.atos.org/Pages/calendar_form.shtml.

JOURNAL ADVERTISING—Advertising in THEATRE ORGAN is a great way to spread the word for your concerts, films, special events or other activities. Be sure to direct your inquires to Jeff Weiler, weiler@atos.org.

QUESTIONS—Please feel free to contact me with any membership questions or concerns.

ATOS welcomes Tom Blackwell as its new Web Site Manager. He can be reached at blackwell@atos.org

— Jim Merry
merry@atos.org
714-773-4354
P.O. Box 5327
Fullerton, CA 92838-0327

PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Several years ago, the ATOS Board of Directors initiated a program by which chapters which either own or are totally responsible for the maintenance of a theatre pipe organ installed, or to be installed, in an essentially public venue can receive advice from a qualified organ technician. The Technical Assistance Program assists those in need of professional consultation to better access a technician familiar with high-pressure theatre instruments.

We are all very familiar with installations, restorations and improvements which have been compromised do to lack of professional advice up front, often wasting much time and money in the process. This program is designed to encourage chapters to seek expert technical advice before attempting costly installation, maintenance, or upgrading, which might otherwise be done incorrectly.

Under the terms of this program, ATOS will provide partial payment of the transportation costs (currently up to \$250) and partial payment (currently up to \$250) of the fee charged by the professional technician. The local chapter is responsible for the remainder of the costs involved. The program is not designed to assist with the payment for actual work done by technicians or their assistants, but to help chapters in obtaining the best possible technical advice before embarking on any installation or program of restoration, refurbishment, upgrading, or enlargement. (ATOS Endowment Fund grants are available for assistance with the actual work involved in these various projects.) Funding for this program is budgeted annually by the ATOS Board of Directors. It will be provided as long as budgeted funds are available during any fiscal year, and will be provided to chapters on a first-come, first-served basis.

The president of any ATOS chapter interested in using this service is invited to contact the chairman of the ATOS Technical Assistance Program, Cory Wright, to obtain a copy of the program application and list of guidelines.

Cory Wright 2107 S. Grand Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63104, 314-678-0896, wright@atos.org

A CALL FOR DOCUMENTS

Theatre Organ Installation Document Research Project

The ATOS Technical and Education Committees are jointly requesting the assistance of all ATOS members who have access to original factory organ chamber and contractor blueprints, drawings, contracts, photos, specifications and correspondence. The goal is to acquire historic documents to include in the ever-expanding ATOS Archive. This request for documentation includes all builders of theatre pipe organs.

Although a number of original Wurlitzer drawings are presently available through the Smithsonian Institution, they represent less than 10% of the total number generated by the firm. We are seeking originals, or high-quality copies, of prints and documents that do not exist in the Smithsonian Wurlitzer collection. Equally important is the acquisition of installation blueprints and technical drawings of Robert-Morton, Barton, Marr & Colton, Kimball and other theatre organ builders.

Please assist us with this important project, before the gnawing tooth of time wipes away more of our important history.

Contact Carlton Smith, Chairman, ATOS Technical Committee, for further information, assistance and coordination, at smith@atos.org or 317-697-0318.

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News & Notes

MINUTES OF THE 2006 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING OF THE

Held during the 2006 Tampa, Florida, Annual Convention

Tampa Theatre, Tampa, Florida May 28, 2006, 9:00 A.M.

The Annual Meeting of the ATOS Membership was called to order by President Gus Franklin. He noted that the Meeting would be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order and that Jeff Weiler would serve as the Parliamentarian. A quorum was present to conduct the business given in the notice of the Meeting.

The President made some introductory comments. He thanked the Convention Committee, and the Central Florida and Manasota Chapters for hosting the Convention and hoped everyone was enjoying the Convention.

The meeting was open to any member of ATOS whether attending the Convention or not. Voting, should it be needed, would be limited to a member or only one person of a family membership.

It was noted that the meeting was being recorded for purposes of producing the minutes of the meeting by the Secretary and would not be available to anyone for any other purpose.

Current Officers were introduced: President – Gus Franklin; Vice President – Bob Davidson; Secretary – Jack Moelmann; and Treasurer – Paul Van Der Molen.

The new Officers for 2006-2007 were introduced: Bob Davidson - President; Michael Fellenzer – Vice President; Jack Moelmann - Secretary, and Paul Van Der Molen - Treasurer.

New members elected to the Board of Directors this year for a 3-year term were welcomed: Michael Fellenzer but it was noted that he resigned as an elected Director and Donna Parker was appointed by the Board to fill the vacancy. Others elected this year were Don Near and Doug Powers.

The Directors and Staff were introduced (not necessarily in this order) and present for the meeting: Mike Cierski, Jelani Eddington, Russell Holmes, Ed Mullins, Don Near, Nelson Page, Donna Parker, Doug Powers, and Carlton Smith. Staff Members/Committee Chairs: Jim Merry, Mike Kinerk, Jeff Weiler, Dan Bellomy, and Jim and Delores Patak. John Riester, the Youth Representative to the Board was absent.

A motion was made by Tom Hoehn with a second by Ken Double to approve the minutes of the last Annual Meeting in 2005 held in Pasadena, California, as published in the November/December 2005 issue of THEATRE ORGAN - Unanimous.

The Treasurer, Paul Van Der Molen, gave the treasurer's report: For the ten months, the income was \$264,000, expenses were \$261,000 which brought us close to our income. The Board approved, pending IRS approval, an ATOS fiscal year ending April 30 of each year. The endowment fund has \$166,000, and everyone was encouraged to consider making contributions to the fund, possibly through estates.

A motion to approve the report was made by Floyd Broussard and a second by Tom Hoehn - Unanimous.

The Secretary, Jack Moelmann, gave a report of actions taken by the Board during the past year.

The ATOS Board of Directors met two times in 2006 since the last meeting in Pasadena in 2005. The meetings were a mid-year meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, January 7, 2006 and the Annual Board of Directors' Meeting in Tampa beginning on Tuesday, May 23, 2006.

The following actions were taken:

- a. The ATOS Archive rented space in Joliet, Illinois, was increased to 910 sq. ft. at \$800.04/month for the first year; \$823.55/month for the second year, and \$847.81/month for the third year. (This is a 3% annual increase for the three years).
- b. What had been referred to as a New Jersey Area Convention for 2007 was renamed as the "ATOS Grand Organ Tour 2007" with Nelson Page and Mike Kinerk serving as co-chairs.
- c. A resolution was adopted which allows a bank account to be established for the 2007 Convention with signatories being Nelson Page and Mike Kinerk (the convention co-chairs), Bob Maney (the Convention Treasurer), and Paul Van Der Molen (the ATOS Treasurer).

- d. A proposed Annual Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, in 2008 was approved with Tim Needier serving as the Convention Chairman.
- e. A Convention Emcee will be offered reimbursement for travel to and from a convention at the lowest economy rate, the convention registration, any extras where the emcee's service would be required, e.g. jam sessions, and the hotel nights of the convention including the night before the convention starts and after it ends. In addition, the emcee will be offered an honorarium of \$500. The cost of the banquet will also be included should an emcee be required for the event. Should an emcee be required for the pre-glow and/or after-glow involving organ related activities, the costs for any additional honorarium and/or hotel costs will be the responsibility of the host Chapter. This section is intended as a guideline. Other compensations could be provided, either higher or lower, if specific conditions require adjustments, provided the arrangements are approved by the convention committee and by the ATOS CPC, and finally through the overall event budget approval process, which also requires approval by ATOS Treasurer.
- f. ATOS will place an ad for the Wurlitzer Book in the Organ Historical Society (OHS) Convention Handbook at a cost of approximately \$520.
- g. Sales of the ATOS Calendar have not done well. They will be sent to a print shop and cut down to sell strictly as photo sets.
- h. In order to have a formal resolution concerning the establishment of archives, the following resolution was made: ATOS will create and maintain archives for the preservation of historical materials pertinent to the interests of ATOS as well as the business records of the Society.
- i. The Educators Guide and the Shop Notes are no longer available as they are out of print.

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- j. \$5,000 was approved to acquire new space and move the Marketplace from the San Diego, California, area to a location closer and more convenient to the Marketplace Manager's residence (i.e., John Ledwon).
 - k. The Advertising Manager position was terminated effective April 15, 2006. The advertising function will be incorporated into the responsibilities of the Journal Editor at a compensation of 10% of gross advertising revenues. Jeff Weiler is to assume the duties of the Journal Editor on September 1, 2006 as an independent contractor at the rate of \$1,000 per month. However, beginning with the March/April 2006 and through the July/August issues of the Journal, he would serve as Co-Editor as an independent contractor at the rate of \$1,000 per issue. Dan Bellomy was appointed Web Site Manager and Editor.
 - l. The Pipe Organ Owners Group and its publication "The Glue Pot" were terminated mainly because of lack of interest and participation.
 - m. The Student of the Year Award recipient, and a parent or guardian for a person under the age of 18, will be provided a banquet ticket at the Annual Convention, as applicable.
 - n. The current membership of ATOS is 4,180 as of April 30 which is down from 4367 as reported in July 2005.
 - o. With the realignment of the Journal advertising function, Michael Fellenzer, as the Advertising Manager, will be offered \$2,000 as a settlement for monies owed up through April 15, 2006. Jeff Weiler is to assume the advertising responsibilities as Co-Editor and future Editor of the Journal as of April 15, 2006.
 - p. All invoices from vendors for work done for any ATOS publication are to be sent to the Publisher for approval before payment is made by the Treasurer. Additional copies are to be sent to the President and Journal Editor.
 - q. All forms, leaflets, and brochures which include any names of current Directors or Staff personnel, any indication of current membership rates, or any other then current information which could be changed by Board action during the course of a given year shall be printed in such quantity as not to exceed the anticipated use of said documents during that year. Additionally, since all such documents are publications of ATOS, they are to be approved in draft form by the Publisher and the Publications Manager before any printing order is executed.
 - r. The policy inviting the ATOS International News Editor to Board Meetings was deleted since the ATOS International News is no longer a separate publication but only included as a centerfold in the Journal.
 - s. All agreements and contracts will be approved and signed by the President unless the Board has specifically delegated this responsibility in writing to another official for a specified activity or program (e.g. the Convention Planning Coordinator). A copy of each such document, signed by the President, will be maintained by the Secretary.
 - t. Economy air fare (defined as economy coach fare for a non-stop, daytime flight if available, booked at least one month in advance) will be reimbursed for Directors and Staff members in order to attend scheduled Board of Directors' meetings.
 - u. The option to pay \$500 for two years to become a Life Member (The President's Circle) was eliminated. The Life Membership rate remains at \$1,000 to be paid at one time and a \$500 tax deductible incentive is offered.
 - v. Dan Bellomy, as the new Web Site Manager, was authorized to procure a new computer system at the cost of \$1,802.
 - w. The Executive Secretary's contract was extended from April 30 to the end of May with no changes made at the time.
 - x. An attorney was retained to provide written notice to the New York Chapter concerning an apparent dispute over the 2007 convention scheduled to be held in the Chapter's area of operation.
 - y. \$540 was approved for the purchase of a new printer for the Executive Secretary needed for the production of various membership documents.
 - z. \$5,000 was approved as a settlement to the New York Theatre Organ Society over the dispute over the 2007 convention being planned in their area of operation.
- Actions taken at the meeting in Tampa, May 2006:
- aa. Michael Fellenzer, Don Near and Doug Powers were seated to the Board after their successful election this year.
 - bb. The appointment of officers resulted in the following:
President - Bob Davidson
Vice-President - Michael Fellenzer
Secretary - Jack Moelmann
Treasurer - Paul Van Der Molen
 - cc. The following Archive Collections Policy for the ATOS Archives was approved: The American Theatre Organ Society Archive actively pursues the acquisition and preservation of historic, primary research materials specifically related to the theatre pipe organ, theatre organists, and the corporate activities of ATOS and its Chapters. These materials include photos, stoplists, and specifications of theatre organ installations; contracts, correspondence, blueprints, engineering documents, and business records pertaining to theatre organ installations and theatre organ builders; photos, correspondence, performance contracts, programs, recordings and scores as they relate specifically to the activities of theatre organists

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and theatre organ personalities; books, drafts, transcripts, lectures, interviews and other publications related to the theatre pipe organ; silent film scores, pedagogues, and music specifically composed, arranged, or adapted for the theatre organ; oral histories, written reminiscences, and other documents or artifacts relating specifically to the theatre organ.

- dd. A new Chapter, the Great Lakes Chapter, was approved. The Chapter's area of operation serves Western and Central Michigan as well as Northern Indiana.
- ee. The Board accepted the resignation of Joy Stephens, long term Parliamentarian to the Board of Directors. Jeff Weiler assumed the duties as Parliamentarian effective immediately.
- ff. The following grants were awarded from the Endowment Fund for 2006: The Central Ohio Chapter was awarded \$1500 for the purchase of a post horn for the Worthington High School Chapter Wurlitzer. The Central Florida Chapter was awarded \$750 toward the purchase of a Wurlitzer Toy Counter for the Pinella Park Auditorium Wurlitzer.
- gg. An ATOS memorial fund will be established for donations to the endowment fund in memory of lost ones
- hh. The Trustees for the Endowment Fund were appointed for 2006-2007:
 Michael Fellenzer - Chairman
 Nelson Page - Board Member and Recording Secretary
 Paul Van Der Molen - Financial Secretary (Treasurer)
 Alden Stockebrand - Member
 Bob Maney - Member
- ii. Bob Miloche was appointed as the chair of the Nominations Committee. Fern Siemens will continue to serve as the election teller.
- jj. In addition to the four officers, Don Near and Nelson Page were appointed to the Executive Committee.
- kk. The Executive Secretary's contract was renewed for the period June 1, 2006 to August 31, 2007 at the rate of \$2,000 which represents an increase of \$500 per month.
- ll. The Budget for 2006-2007 was approved.
- mm. Paragraph 4.3 of the bylaws was revised to delete the requirement to have a "withhold" space on the election ballot.
- nn. Elected Director, Michael Fellenzer, resigned his seat on the Board but remained as the appointed Vice President. Donna Parker was appointed by the Board to fill the vacancy.
- oo. A policy concerning annual election procedures was changed to the following: Candidate résumés are to be sent to the Nominating Committee Chairperson. It is strongly recommended that nominations be sent via "return receipt" or similar mail class if international. Nominations may also be sent digitally; however, the sender MUST verify receipt of the nomination by the Chairperson.
- pp. The following committees were approved for 2006-2007:
 Acquisitions & Expansions
 Awards and Recognition
 Archives/Library
 ATOS International News
 Bylaws
 Chapter Relations
 Convention Planning
 David L. Junchen Technical Scholarship
 Education & Archival Liaison
 Electronics Organs (ETONES)
 Electronic Theatre Organ Competition
 Endowment Fund
 Historian
 Inner-City Youth Program
 Membership
 Mentor Program
 Nominations - Board Elections
 Organist Scholarships
 Public Relations
 Publications Review
 Publisher

- Restoration and Preservation
- Simonton Literary Prize
- Strategic Planning
- Technical
- Technical Consultation Program
- ATOS Hobbyist Competition
- Young Theatre Organist Competition
- Youth Initiatives
- George Wright Memorial Fellowship
- Theatre Organ Instructor Lists
- Theatre Organ Student of the Year
- Theatre Organ Workshops

A mid-year meeting of the Board of Directors will be held in January 2007 in the Chicago, Illinois, Suburb Area.

The next Annual ATOS Membership Meeting will be held in conjunction with the 2007 Annual Convention with the specific time and date and place to be announced in the Theatre Organ Journal.

Members of the Board and Staff were asked if they wanted to make any comments.

Jim Merry - Membership and Executive Secretary matters.

Mike Kinerk - Convention Planning.

Russell Holmes - Young Theatre Organist Competition.

Ed Mullins - Chapter Relations and noting a 2/3 Wurlitzer available from Wyoming.

Doug Powers - Strategic planning.

Michael Fellenzer - Expressed appreciation for being able to serve ATOS.

Don Near - Expressed his appreciation for being elected and encouraged Chapters to host a convention.

NEW BUSINESS: No items were brought to the floor.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned with a motion from Henry McCluer and a second from Tom Hoehn at 9:45 A.M. - Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

—Jack Moelmann, Secretary

Vox Pops

Please send your items of interest to the Editor.

Rosa Rio

Rosa Rio, famous theatre organist now living in Florida, scored a hit with her accompaniment at the Tampa Theatre of the silent film, *On the Rocks*, at the 2006 Tampa convention. Recently, Ms. Rio was featured on National Public Radio. The interview may be heard on the NPR web site: www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyid=5559593#email.

Pop Quiz

The Technical Seminar at the Tampa convention created some hubbub by adding an unexpected element: a challenging and imaginative test of Wurlitzer-specific organ knowledge. During the course of the presentation by **Jeff Weiler, Carlton Smith, and Clark Wilson**, 33 numbered bags were passed through the audience, along with score sheets and pencils. The bags contained common Wurlitzer parts which would be encountered during the course of an organ restoration. The object was to identify each part by name or function, and the prize for the highest score was, appropriately, a copy of the book, *The Wurlitzer Pipe Organ: An Illustrated History*, won by **Doug Powers**. What do you suppose they're orchestrating for next year in New York?

Journal of American Organbuilding

Quarterly Publication of the American Institute of Organbuilders

This publication is devoted to the dissemination of knowledge regarding the design, construction and maintenance of pipe organs in North America. Although primarily a technical journal for the benefit of organbuilding professionals, it is also a valuable resource for architects and project consultants, church musicians, building committees, seminary and university libraries, and anyone involved with the design or renovation of contemporary worship space.

Far from being the "lost art" that the average person believes it to be, organbuilding in the United States and Canada is maturing and thriving in hundreds of small and large shops throughout the continent. At the same time, serious challenges lie ahead for those promoting the pipe organ in an era of limited budgets and competing options. Readers of the *Journal of American Organbuilding* will benefit from the thoughtful exchange of information and ideas intended to advance this time-honored craft.

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Jesse Crawford

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Terry Hochmuth contributed this vintage ad. Jesse Crawford, famous organist of the New York Paramount Theatre, defined a theatre organ performance practice that influences musicians to this day. His following was legion, and his name had widespread star appeal. Then as today, fame translates to dollars in the marketplace.

In the Spotlight

"In the Spotlight" focuses on theatre pipe organ restoration, rebuilding, tonal finishing, and installation projects. Items of interest should be sent to the Editor.



RICHARDS AND MITCHELL—THE TIBIA TWOSOME!

Theatre organist Rob Richards has teamed up with noted tonal finisher and Wurlitzer authority Ron Mitchell on several projects across the United States.

Popping up cross-country to tweak Tibias and tremms, Richards and Mitchell have accomplished tonal refinements at the El Capitan Theatre (Hollywood, California), Fargo Theatre (Fargo, North Dakota), McKinney Performing Arts Center (McKinney, Texas) and the Ben Robertson residence (Harrisville, Pennsylvania).

Richards' involvement with these projects has also included various elements such as master planning and specifications, as well as pipework selection/acquisition and rank placement.

Ron Mitchell's abilities are legendary, having refined Tibias and tremms in many of America's finest theatre organs. His abilities were honed on the George Wright "Leslie Studio" Wurlitzer (Pasadena, California), and his specialty is getting "that sound" out of the instruments on which he works.

The duo look forward to ongoing collaborations on several future projects.

*Above: Wurlitzer expert and master tonal finisher Ron Mitchell stands amidst a garden of brass at the Vincent Aveni home in Cleveland, Ohio
(Photo by R. Richards)*



Above: Organbuilder Grahame Davis with the refinished Wurlitzer console for the Plaza Theatre, El Paso, Texas

Right: The restoration of a 5-stop Wurlitzer chest destined for installation at the Hillbert Circle Theatre nears completion (Smith Collection)



GRAHAME DAVIS

Grahame Davis reports that installation proceeds well on the refurbished and expanded Plaza Theatre organ in El Paso, Texas. The instrument, a Wurlitzer Balaban 3 (Opus 2123, 1930), returns to its original home after a hiatus of several years. After removal from the theatre, the organ went to a residence in Dallas followed by an unsuccessful installation in a shopping mall. It now returns to the Plaza, having been carefully rebuilt by Davis' company, Pipe Organ Artisans of Arizona. Additions include several vintage Wurlitzer stops: Diaphonic Horn Diapason, Solo Violin Celeste, Solo Vox Humana, an additional Tibia Clausa, and Concert Flute Celeste. A new English Horn and Krumet have been supplied by Trivo, and a Gottfried 16' Oboe Horn has been acquired and reconditioned to extend the original 8' Wurlitzer stop.

CARLTON SMITH

An enviable backlog of work exists at Carlton Smith Pipe Organ Restorations of Indianapolis. A three-manual, 12-rank Barton organ has undergone an historically sensitive rebuild and is slated for installation this fall at the Dixon Theatre, Dixon, Illinois. Also underway is a three-manual, 24-rank Wurlitzer organ for the Hillbert Circle Theatre in Indianapolis, the home of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. And if that weren't enough, the company is managing the rebuild of a three-manual, 12-rank Wurlitzer (Opus 1871, 1928) for the Central Indiana Chapter. This instrument is to be installed at the Indiana Theatre, Terre Haute, with completion in the fall of 2007. Smith, widely known for his exquisite restoration of art-case consoles, will be rebuilding consoles for the Barton organ at Springfield High School, Springfield, Illinois; the Wurlitzer organ and console for installation at the Kentucky Theatre, Lexington; and a complete historic restoration of the Barton console at the Ironwood Theatre, Ironwood, Michigan.

TERRY HOCHMUTH

Your Editor wonders if the old saying, "What goes around, comes around," may apply here. Read on:

Terry Hochmuth writes from Fort Lauderdale, "I first encountered the Boston Mattapan Oriental Wurlitzer in 1983 [Wurlitzer Balaban 2, opus 2131, 1930] when we purchased it from Larry MacPherson in Indianapolis, restored it and installed it in a custom addition to our home in New Lenox, Illinois. It remained there until mid-1996 when we sold it to Ron Rhode and Ron Tanner in Phoenix.

"In planning a new home on Cape Cod, I began to search for a suitable instrument and received calls from several friends and from Ron himself, that the instrument was once again becoming available. It took very little consideration to know that I'd love to have that organ back.

"We removed it during the first week of June. The project was orchestrated and overseen by Adrian Phillips, Jr., who did a phenomenal job of making sure that each and every detail was taken care of to the nth degree.

In the Spotlight

“The organ was loaded onto a 53' truck and shipped to safe storage near Providence, Rhode Island. It will remain there until the house in North Truro is ready for it. The house will also have space for a very complete woodworking and organ shop, and two complete Wurlitzers will be totally rebuilt there. The Oriental organ, when we installed it in New Lenox, went in entirely on its original 1930 leather without any problems. That was in 1982 and now we're 20+ years later, so it's time for the instrument to be releathered.

“The preliminary plans call for the Oriental organ (which is going to go back to the 22 ranks that it was in my house in New Lenox) to be installed in chambers under the Music Room, speaking through floor grilles.

“A Wurlitzer RJ11 [opus 2137] will speak from the second level of the house into the Music Room. It will be a historically accurate restoration—nothing at all will be changed from the way it was when installed at the Harleigh Memorial Mausoleum in Camden, New Jersey in 1930. An interesting note to this organ is that every windline in the instrument, save

the swell shade and Chrysoglott feed lines and the tremulant windline, were constructed entirely of wood!

“When this organ was removed from Camden about 1962, the player mechanism was removed and the console was “remodeled” into a brown Formica-covered thing that only resembled a console at all when its piano-hinged cover was opened. All of the original carvings were removed and discarded. When I acquired it, a search went out for a replacement RJ player console. (I have since located and purchased another RJ instrument with an intact console.)

“Several months back, a Wurlitzer RJ player mechanism and relay were offered on eBay. I was the successful bidder and when I went to Pittsburgh to pick it up, its factory job tag (as well as a couple of dozen intact rolls) indicated that it was shipped to Harleigh Memorial in Camden. So after a period of 44 years, player and console were reunited!

“We're planning to begin the project shortly, as soon as my business interests in Florida have been sold.”

JEFF WEILER

Every so often, an instrument surfaces after having long fallen from memory. Such is the case with the Style 260 Wurlitzer pipe organ originally installed in the Howard Theatre (renamed Paramount in 1929), Atlanta, Georgia. For anything to have lasted over 80 years intact and in original condition is amazing. For a theatre organ to have lasted so long, and remain truly the work of its builder, is cause for celebration. Jeff Weiler of Chicago has recently acquired this instrument, its pipes still wrapped in 1958 newspaper, from a private owner in Texas. There, the organ has remained safe, protected by its owner, but mute. A thorough historical restoration with no modifications, re-specifications or additions is planned.

LUKE HEADLEY

And speaking of organs historic, young organ restorer Luke Headley of Wichita, Kansas has embarked on a noble pursuit. An assemblage of vintage Wurlitzer parts has given way to a complete and original Style EX (the X being the factory designation for a small instrument divided into two chambers). Opus 1614, originally installed in 1927 at Houston's Kirby Theatre, shall be restored with no changes or additions. Thousands of two-manual organs like this one defined what a theatre organ was for much of the world. It gives one pause when considering how very few survive unaltered.



Left: Wurlitzer opus 2131 has been removed to New England (Hochmuth Collection)

Right: Opus 1097 (1925), from the Howard/Paramount Theatre, Atlanta (Weiler Collection)



From the Archives



Mystery Photo

The ATOS Archive is full of unidentified photos of organists and organ consoles. Can you help us establish the identity of the gentleman pictured and the location of the Kimball organ? If so, please contact the Editor.

(ATOS Archive Collection)

ATOS Archive Collections Policy: The American Theatre Organ Society Archive actively pursues the acquisition and preservation of historic, primary research materials specifically related to the theatre pipe organ, theatre organists, and the corporate activities of ATOS and its chapters. These materials include photos, stoplists, and specifications of theatre organ installations; contracts, correspondence, blueprints, engineering documents, and business records pertaining to theatre organ installations and theatre organ builders;

photos, correspondence, performance contracts, programs, recordings and scores as they relate specifically to the activities of theatre organists and theatre organ personalities; books, drafts, transcripts, lectures, interviews and other publications related to the theatre pipe organ; silent film scores, pedagogies, and music specifically composed, arranged, or adapted for the theatre organ; oral histories, written reminiscences, and other documents or artifacts relating specifically to the theatre organ.

A NEW SERIES FOR THEATRE ORGAN

BY STEVE LAMANNA

Over the coming months, THEATRE ORGAN will be publishing a new series of interviews with individuals who have positively impacted our amazing field of interest.

The series will be conducted along the lines of *Inside the Actors Studio*, or *Rolling Stone*. The focus will be more in-depth, revealing more about the interviewee's life, interests and contributions. We intend to feature those who have not have been heard from in a while, perhaps overlooked, or who may be new to you. All have played a pivotal role in the pipe organ community.

Our subjects comprise artists, organbuilders, collectors and curators. They represent a broad cross-section of the theatre organ world, each with a unique perspective. Some have never granted interviews before. While many have preferred to let their work speak for itself, we feel that their own words need to be documented in these pages. Included will be photos, many never before published, and we hope you will find the stories, anecdotes, wisdom and information to be exciting, provocative and heart-rending.

Our first subject, Richard Kline, has not been featured in THEATRE ORGAN since 1970. Long an influential figure in organ circles, his is a fascinating story.

We hope you'll enjoy this new feature.



Interview

Steve LaManna speaks with Richard Kline



*Dick Kline plays the Wurlitzer
(Kline Collection)*

*Inset: Dick Kline is still as youthful
and vibrant today as he was when
we last visited him*

Driving up to the home of Richard Kline, we could not help being overwhelmed by the beauty and tranquility of the Maryland countryside. It has been almost 36 years since THEATRE ORGAN visited the estate of a man who continues to be influential in many musical circles including that of the theatre organ. It seems only appropriate to begin our interview series with such an icon.

Our subject, while still spending much time at his Maryland home, now travels frequently to Florida and Washington, D.C., where he still has a multitude of great friends and admirers.

Dick Kline is amazingly young, vibrant and charming as he welcomes us back to his famous four-manual Wurlitzer. We had a chance to fire it up a number of times during these interviews, and it sounds exactly the same as it does on the famous Lee Erwin recordings made in the 1970s on the Angel label. Other recordings have been made by Lyn Larsen and John Steele. The organ has had little done to it since that time, but has been played by Mr. Kline and others with regularity, and continues to sound beautifully.

Entering the home sited on 50 acres, we are immediately impressed with its understated elegance, reminiscent of a country manor. The main house sits adjacent to a huge rock quarry, now filled with water becoming a lake. Canada Geese have made their home on the Kline property, and the abundance of trees and greenery create immediate tranquility. The wisteria which covers a great portion of the outer deck laces the entrance to the organ studio. This is where the affable Mr. Kline sat down with us for a number of days, freely giving of his time, hospitality, stories and opinions about his world, and his undying passion for pipes.



Where were you born? I was born in Frederick, Maryland, where I have made my home for many years. Until recently, I also had a place in the city (Washington, D.C.), which I finally sold. Lots of traffic there these days!

What did your father do? Your mother? My father was a pioneer in highway construction in the state of Maryland back in the 40s. My mother trained as a nurse at Sibley hospital in Washington, D.C.

Where did you go to school? Public schools in Frederick and then the Mercersburg Academy in southern Pennsylvania, which had a 4/52 E.M. Skinner organ. That really hooked me. Later I sang with Alex McCurdy in Philadelphia, and I truly discovered classical organ music.

You sing! Do we have another Lowell Ayers or Karl Cole here? No comment.

When was the first time you heard a pipe organ? The first time was at the Methodist Church in Frederick, Maryland. I was hooked from the moment I set eyes and ears on it. At some point I managed to be able to sit with the organist for the postlude each Sunday and [I] drove her crazy with questions.

Imagine that! An organ enthusiast with questions...how rare. When was the first time you heard a theatre organ? Probably the organ that I am now privileged to own, at the old Capitol Theatre in D.C.

You had a love for organs and theatre at quite a young age, didn't you? Right from the start. It was a drug and still is. I'm hooked.

Your interests are rather "bipolar" in terms of pipe organs, including both theatre and classical. I love the theatre organ for its diversity and ability to play pretty much everything, and its puppy dog friendliness. I love the classical organ equally. Its literature never ceases to amaze and delight me.

Who do you like in the classical organ world these days? Well, Tom Murray, Mark Laubach, Michael Kleinschmidt, Eric Plutz, Doug Major, Gillian Weir and Peter Conte. How's that for a mix?

What about a favorite organ? OK. It has to be the li'l 1826 Wilfred Hall six-rank tracker in my living room. Some restoration work was done on that one by Bob Wyant, the longtime curator of the Washington Cathedral Organ.

The Kline home (Kline Collection)

What made you decide to put a pipe organ in your home? Like a lot of owners, the accessibility. It's frustrating as a kid trying to get into a theatre, and the thought of having one where you could come down at 3:00am and turn it on is paradise. I know this isn't a possibility for a lot of folks, and I have always tried to make what I have here accessible to those who have real interest. Sadly, not much has changed since you folks were last here, in terms of international availability of theatre organs for those interested. It's tough to just go by a theatre, walk in and try one out.

So our newbie readers can come up to speed, what organs/consoles were the genesis of what you have here today? That's easy! As I mentioned earlier, The Fox/Capitol Theatre in Washington D.C., the console of which Ben Hall referred to as "The Baby Fox." He told me to never change the design. It was a 1927 Style 260. Then there was the New Manos Theatre in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. That was a 1926 H Special. We actually have seven sets of swell shades in this organ for five chambers. It makes a great fit for the studio. We have two for the Main, two for the Solo, two for the Percussion chambers, and one for the Echo.

By the way, thanks for letting us hold a couple of the Musettes! Thank God you didn't drop them!

How did you go about discovering all of this? I had known about the Fox/Capitol Theatre closing thanks to Ray Brubacher who lived nearby. When the wrecking ball was almost on site, I had to move quickly. The rest of the organ just came about by word of mouth, as usual.

We understand there are a few unusual and rather historic ranks in the chambers. Well first there is the Musette, originally from WLW in Cincinnati. It was the first one Wurlitzer ever built and dates from, I think, 1924. John Steele found it in Ohio where an organbuilder was about to change reeds and lower the pressure to 4". The Morton Tibia in the Echo was given by Reg Watson (who helped design the Foort organ) to Harold Warner in Richmond to be included at the Mosque. Harold died before that happened and his sister gave it to me. The other fine rank is the big Posthorn, considered by

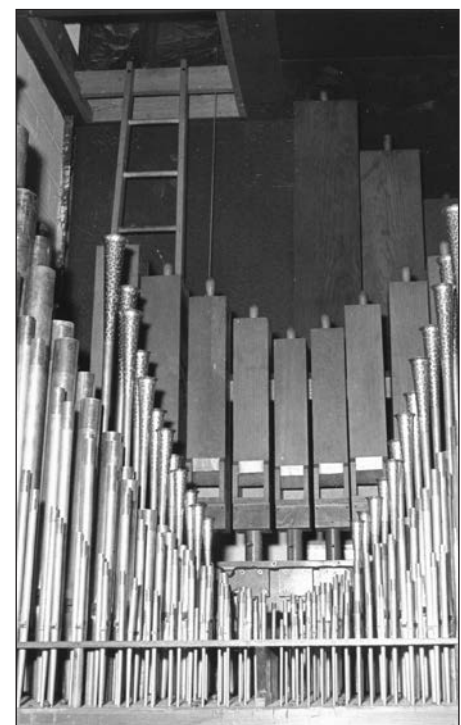


many to be too loud and assertive. It was voiced by Adolph Zajic at Möller...his first real Posthorn, I think, since the Foort organ. I always tell a player that there is another smaller Posthorn in the Echo that works very well, and to use it. The big one should be renamed and then it might be better accepted.

We also noticed the wonderful room presence. I look up and see a couple of speakers in the room. Are these part of a reverberation system? Yes. And, if there is one thing I highly recommend: Don't ever put the reverb speakers in the chambers if you decide to use such a device. Use the room.

How about the pianos? What history do they have? I have been lucky to obtain a 1921 Weber Duo Art, playable from the organ. The black grand is a Falcone, built near Boston nearly 20 years ago. Only about 100 were built, which is a shame. They are wonderful pianos.

What do you think about the new breed of mega-instruments? Sanfilippo's, Dickenson, San Sylmar, Organ Stop? I have no problems with them. They are beautifully installed and maintained. I'm jealous!



Top: The Capitol Theatre Wurlitzer console before removal. Above: Rear of Solo chamber. (Kline Collection)

"I was hooked from the moment I set eyes and ears on it. It was a drug and still is."

“Lee played like
no one else in
the world.”

Dick Kline in the Solo chamber
(Kline Collection)

What about pipes vs. digital? Do you have any thoughts about the current breeds of electronic/digital creations? I have not a problem with either of them. I think that when you can put in a real pipe organ, you should. Some of these digitals are sounding very good these days, but I wouldn't want to say they are exact. In the end, they are electronically generated.

Talk to us about Lee Erwin. When did you two first meet? I met Lee so early on I'm not sure how we met. But we knew each other from way before the period of the three discs made here for Angel, and I knew our friendship would be long and rich. I knew of Lee's wonderful studio work, and knew that he would be perfect for these discs, as he could work with Patti Laursen, the producer, and Carson Taylor, chief recording engineer for Capitol records. Patti was one of the toughest record producers I ever have known. Capitol would not allow any piston noise, so Lee had to make all changes off-mic and then continue in the exact context of the last take, and hundreds of times. No one without his studio experience could have played those phrases so seamlessly. We never had a computer hooked up to this instrument. And, just like George Wright, many takes had to be made to get things correct. Lee played like no one

else in the world. His style was as distinct as Billy Nalle, Ashley Miller, Buddy Cole and, of course, Mr. Wright. I am so happy that we were able to document a lot of his great genius on those recordings. Lee was also a great and kind gentleman of the old school. You were instantly at ease with him whether you knew him or not. We were all wrecks for a long time when he died.

Other than Lee Erwin, who do you miss most in our group? Probably Billy Nalle. Here was a guy with gigantic talent, but very much to himself. He wasn't a gadabout. And to watch him play was to see him think. It was frightening to see the musical capabilities that man had. He retired some time after moving to Wichita. Not a lot was heard about him when he went back to Florida. He was originally from Florida. Not a lot of folks know that. He was even more reclusive in Florida than he had been elsewhere. We talked all the time though, same old Billy on the phone. It was just impossible to get him to do anything socially or musically. Interestingly, he studied with Eddie Ford at the Tampa Theatre. I know that [the group in] Wichita is about to release some of his old recordings on CD and I think that is wonderful.

The recordings that currently exist on your instrument were made by Lee, John and Lyn. They are unusual and highly interesting. Any chance of them coming back on CD? I doubt if Capitol would have any interest in re-releasing Lee's stuff. And they own all the rights. John Steele made an earlier Christmas disc but because I thought the organ wasn't ready, I asked him not to disclose the location. Lyn Larsen did a wonderfully dreamy disc shortly after Lee's called *That Certain Hour* and it is still selling as a CD I think. He brought Ron Mitchell along with him for the session and Ron worked his special magic on the tremes, and those plain Tibias finally got a shot of Mae West, big time!

What were some highlights of Lee's career in which you took part? He spent a whole week doing *Wings* here in Frederick at the Weinberg center, playing the 2/8 Wurlitzer. It was exciting because the local schools sent busloads of kids to see it, and it made quite an impression on them. [I also remember] three weeks of *Silent Clowns* at the key theatre in Georgetown (D.C.) to sellout audiences.



The 60s–70s were a pivotal time in theatre organ. Lots of things were happening to get them in new places. Who would you consider to be your best friends/acquaintances, other than Lee and Ben, during that time? Well, that would include a number of the folks who were working with me closely on the organ, as well as artists who were established and getting established. There was Larry Brag, Lyn Larsen, Joe Whiteford (the president of Æolian-Skinner) who started the Angel recording sessions. Then, of course, there was the gang at Möller Organ Company.

Let's talk about Ben Hall now. You knew him as well as anyone, and he was a support beam in our world for many years. Was he a difficult man? Yes, perhaps because Ben had several sets of friends—literally. [One group became established] because he was an editor of *Time* magazine, then [he had] his personal friends, and then his theatre friends. And seldom did they mix. He was complex and brilliant, sometimes trying, and always hilarious. You weren't quite sure which Ben you were going to get on a given day. His death was very untimely and tragic. I wish he could have been around a lot longer. He was doing a huge book on the life of Cole Porter. He had exclusive photos of Cole and his wife and friends during a famous trip to Europe. Sadly, they and the book were never published. It would have been a huge addition to the literary studies of Cole's life and times.

Give us an anecdote or two that we might not have heard. Can't think of any that could be printed. Ben had a very ribald sense of humor! Many who knew him can confirm that. He was an astounding MC for ATOS conventions. There hasn't been anyone like him since. He was also famous for his spectacular movie palace slide shows, which showed off the many thousands of photos he had taken over the years. As a matter of fact, that is how we all got alerted to his demise. He was a no-show for a slide show in Rochester, New York. It was at that time that they found him in his New York City apartment, where he had been for several days...just tragic. [Ben Hall was murdered in December of 1970. The crime remains unsolved. Ed.]

Let's talk about the new breed of organists. Many are splendidly talented, but perhaps you have some opinions you might want to share. What is your advice to them? Keep up what you are doing and try to pass along some of your talent to the kids around you.



We are losing a lot of our audience, and we must try to preserve...that's ATOS' motto and I think we often lose sight of it. Our D.C. chapter is a good but sad example of that very thing! But the 2/8 Style 190 organ in the Tivoli Theatre, now called the Weinberg Center, is still here. Ray Brubacher does about six silent films each year. The organ is in good shape and makes a big sound.

What are your current projects? And what are you doing with the organ now? The organ began to play in 1965 and has entertained more than 40 concerts for local chapters as well as American Pipe Organ Builders Association groups, Anglican church musicians, etc. I'm contemplating rewiring and going solid state, but the organ does play pretty well on 45-year-old leather and all original relays. But the [other parts of the] electrical system are not doing as well. I just say she has Alzheimer's and let it go at that. As long as you can use the house pistons, all goes pretty well.



Top: Dick Kline with Lee Erwin (Kline Collection)

Above: Many are familiar with this famous photo of Reginald Foort. Kline owns the original which was rescued before being discarded.

Has there been anything you have wanted to do in your life that you haven't? Learn to read music really well and be a better musician.

Don't we all! Now, even though we will be accused of sounding like Barbra Walters here, if you could sit down for one more conversation with three people in the organ world, alive or dead, who would they be? Maybe Hope-Jones, dear old Jesse, and J.S. Bach, for sure.

Tell us about that picture of Reginald Foot in your dressing room. It was lying on the board room floor at the Möller factory. I think no one knew who he was after all those years and my good pal, Peter Möller Daniels, was kind to let me have it knowing it would be treasured by me.

Thanks for letting us raid your cloakroom to get a picture of it. Sitting here, we noticed that it is quite cool in the house and studio, but we don't remember seeing any kind of air conditioning system in the place. Even in the heat of summer, your A/C seems to be working fine. How do you keep cool? The lake water next to the house is 56 degrees. It is piped into the cooling system which consists of three air handlers which keeps the place very cool without a compressor. We return the water to the lake only one degree higher than when it came out. I recommend everyone dig a big hole next to their house, fill it with water, and try it.



Since you have built your home virtually on top of an old rock quarry, now a lake out your back door, does this present any problems in the house? It has presented a few challenges. During Hurricane Agnes in 1972 and four years ago when flash floods hit this area, we had water flooding into the crawlspace and hitting some organ cables. That has now been remedied.

Finally, what do you think is the most over-used rank on the theatre organ? Probably the Tibia but then I'm as guilty as the next guy, especially if it's a good one.

And the least used stop that should be used more? The trem cancel. The Brits do it so well and we should take note. Just as the trem might be used more on some classical organs. Color is the name of the game. It's like salt and pepper in the hands of a Julia Child.

Dick, this has been a real pleasure, and we thank you for indulging our overdue visit to your home. My pleasure! Next time don't stay away so long...and stay longer!

Above: Rear of Music Room; the Hall Organ (Kline Collection)

“It's frustrating as a kid trying to get into a theatre, and the thought of having one where you could come down at 3:00am and turn it on is paradise.”



Send Your Seasons Greetings

Would you like to send your friends and colleagues greetings of the season? Individuals, businesses, and ATOS chapters are invited to place a holiday greeting in the November/December THEATRE ORGAN. Your single-insertion, black and white, ProCard horizontal or vertical ad will be billed at just \$35. Please follow the standard display ad sizes and copy specifications. The deadline for placing your holiday greeting is October 1, 2006. Please contact either Jeff Weiler, Editor, at weiler@atos.org; or Jeff's Administrative Assistant, Joanne, at 773-878-7817 or joanne@atos.org.

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 > Ron Reseigh - Zeiterion Theatre, 3/9 Wurlitzer
 > Banquet with Jim Riggs - Babson College, 4/18 Wurlitzer
Sunday > Jelani Eddington & David Harris - Shanklin Music Hall, 4/34 Wurlitzer, Mason & Hamlin Ampico Grand Piano
Monday > Demo by Staff Organist(s) - Methuen Memorial Music Hall, 4/115 Walcker /Aeolian-Skinner
(Afterglow) > Richard Hills - Kotschmar Memorial Organ, Portland, ME, 5/102 Austin
 > New England Clambake at Fosters in York, ME
 Stay tuned for more information! (www.EMCATOS.com)




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The Diapason has published its 2006 Resource Directory. Designed as an organist's handbook, the Resource Directory provides listings of companies, individuals, products and services for the organ and church music fields. A directory of associations and calendar of events are also included. The Diapason Resource Directory is available for \$5.00 postpaid, and included free with each subscription to *The Diapason*; 56 pages, 5-3/8" x 8" format.

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Tampa

2006

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Allan H. France
shares his
days at the
Annual
Convention.

Tampa Theatre postcard.
(Weiler Collection)

Monday

When you think of Florida, you are reminded of the three Hs: Heat, Humidity, and Hurricanes! Being that I have been coming down to the West Coast of Florida to be with family for over 30 years, I expected the expected. But it didn't happen like that. My new experiences turned into an unforgettable adventure filled with amusement and camaraderie.

It was a pleasure to be able to attend the 2006 Tampa annual convention in the Sunshine State of Florida. Upon my arrival at the Tampa International Airport, I was whisked away to the Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel & Marina. I immediately entered a world of luxurious indulgence. The marbled lobby glittered and was enveloped by a profusion of gargantuan palm trees. Fountains everywhere! The staff made me feel very welcome the minute I walked through the revolving doors. I settled into my room, walked onto my terrace, took in the magnificent view of Harbor Island and Tampa Bay beyond, and looked forward to the morrow.



Left to right: Marriott Hotel, view from the hotel and hotel lobby with indoor palm trees

(All photos by Allan H. France)

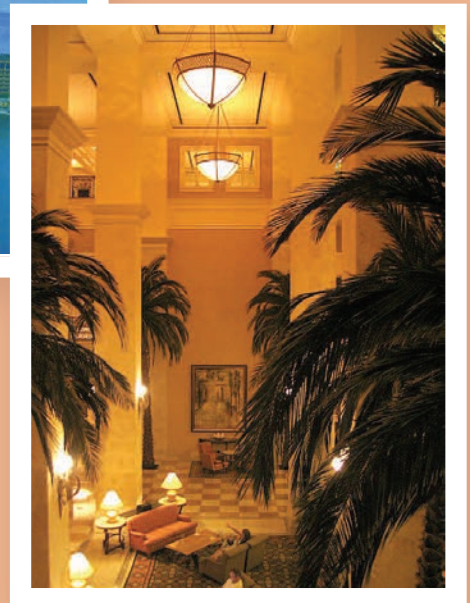
Tuesday

The following day started with the first board meeting of ATOS where business was discussed as usual. Many of our members began to arrive at the hotel and register. It was a time to see lots of familiar faces and meet new people attending their first convention.

A level overlooking the main lobby and bar area contained a reproducing grand piano. I was lucky to meet two of our young organists, David Gray and Donnie Rankin, along with their parents. I decided that we've heard enough recordings; why not hear the real thing? We were among talented musicians, and what better than to listen to live music? It started out with just a few of us taking turns playing, and within a half an hour, there must have been 20 people. I knew we were revving up for a fantastic convention.



The ATOS Board of Directors



Wednesday

Wednesday morning, May 24th started off with registration, followed by a preglow concert at Lake Brantley High School in Altamonte Springs, just east of Orlando. It was a long bus ride, but well worth it to hear Tom Hoehn perform on the 3/12 Wurlitzer. We returned to our hotel, with some others opting to enjoy an evening at Disney World or Epcot, complete with fireworks.

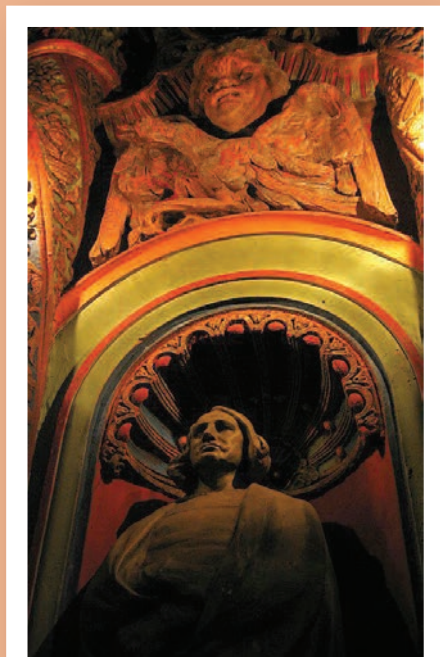


Lake Brantley High School organ

Thursday

Thursday marked the official start to the convention with demonstrations on the Allen Organ and open console, followed by a welcoming cocktail party where one could enjoy interacting with people of like minds. The main attraction took place nearby at the Tampa Theatre which opened in 1926 and remains authentically extravagant. Walking past all the gargoyles and statuary and entering the main auditorium, you feel like you are sitting outside in a Mediterranean villa courtyard. You look up and you see a perfect cobalt blue nighttime sky, with the stars twinkling and the clouds seeming to float by.

The true jewel of the evening was Walter Strony, a highly admired artist in the theatre organ world, playing the 3/14 Wurlitzer. He dazzled us with artistic talent, and offered humble tribute to two fine organists whom we lost this year, Tom Hazleton (1942–2006) and Ashley Miller (1918–2006). At this performance Dick Loderhose made a contribution to ATOS in honor of Hazleton and Miller. John Bell, manager of the Tampa Theatre, was presented with a plaque in honor of his dedication to the facility. All in all, it was a very moving evening, musically and spiritually.



Left to right: Tampa Theatre interior detail, Tampa Theatre exterior, and Walt Strony at the Tampa Theatre 3/14 Wurlitzer

Friday

The next day, we left Tampa and headed south into Sarasota. Once a sleepy little artistic town, it is now one of the most popular tourist destinations on the West Coast of Florida. We were honored to spend the entire day at the Grace Baptist Church which houses the magnificent 4/32 Forker Memorial Wurlitzer.

The morning began with Lew Williams, always an inspiration and an admired performer. Immediately following Lew was David Gray, a Scotsman full of bouncing youth, and the overall 2005 winner for the ATOS Young Theatre Organist Competition. He had a good audience response when he bashfully explained that he was about to play "Sweet Georgia Brown." He said it was as sleazy as he could get, since he didn't think that it was a good idea to play "The Stripper" in a Baptist Church!

Next we had a slide presentation of the regional convention to be held in Boston this November. It looks like an exciting place to be right before the Thanksgiving holidays.

Donnie Rankin, the 2006 Intermediate Division winner of the ATOS Young Theatre Organist Competition, then played for us.

Following Donnie, there was another slide presentation promoting the 2007 annual convention that will take place in July in the Mid-Atlantic states. Ken Double, our Master of Ceremonies, encouraged us not to miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Our next performer from across the pond (England to be exact) was Richard Hills. He never stops amazing his audiences with his true dexterity, talent and professionalism. He had everything under full control.

It was now time for dinner, and the entire group headed into town to dine at a place called "Michael's on East." We must give this place credit: With the unmistakably Floridian atmosphere, delicious food, and clockwork timing, we got back to the Grace Baptist Church to hear our final performer for the evening, Jelani Eddington. A hot, steamy performance by a well-loved artist contributed to a memorable evening. A surprise addition was the combination of Jelani's talents with those of the Florida West Coast Symphony Brass Quintet. The results proved to be very satisfying and ended the evening just right.



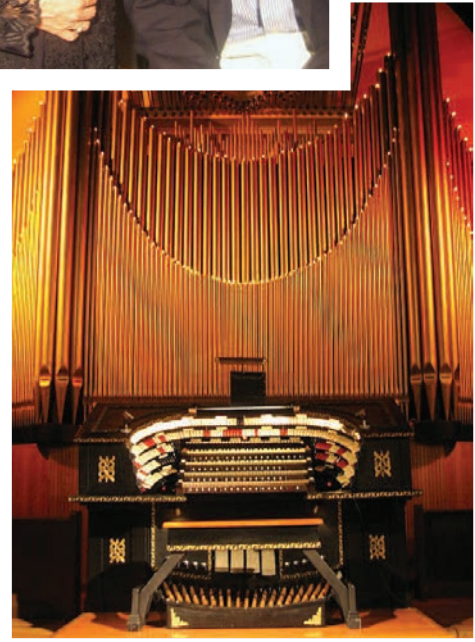
At the Grace Baptist Church with the 4/32 Forker Memorial Wurlitzer (top to bottom): Grace Forker; Donnie Rankin, Richard Hills and David Gray; and Lew Williams

Saturday

The following morning, we attended the Members' Forum during which anyone could state an opinion or raise a question, and a lively and constructive discussion ensued.

After having an early lunch, we boarded the buses (might I add, with the cleanest windows I have ever seen) and headed out to the small town of Dunedin. There, at the Kirk of Dunedin, we paid homage to "The Grand Duchess," a 4/100 hybrid organ with a facade adorned with the Festival Trumpets en Chamade shooting upward into the heavens. Truly a sight to behold, it was designed and assembled by the well-known organist, Terry Charles. We sat anxiously awaiting the first sounds to be played by the lovely Donna Parker, a grande dame in her own right. It was a most satisfying performance, and I look forward to hearing her again. The combination of Donna at the organ and Jelani Eddington at the piano made a perfect duo, and their music just soothed my soul.

Our treat for that evening was attending the screening of the 1928 Buster Keaton silent film, *The Cameraman*, at the Polk Theatre in Lakeland. Clark Wilson performed at the 3/11 Robert-Morton. It's a sign of a great accompanist when your eyes are on the movie, yet the music is part of the experience. Clark and the movie jelled together like love and marriage.



*Donna Parker and
Jelani Eddington at the
Kirk of Dunedin 4/100
hybrid organ*



*Clark Wilson at the Polk Theatre
3/11 Robert-Morton*



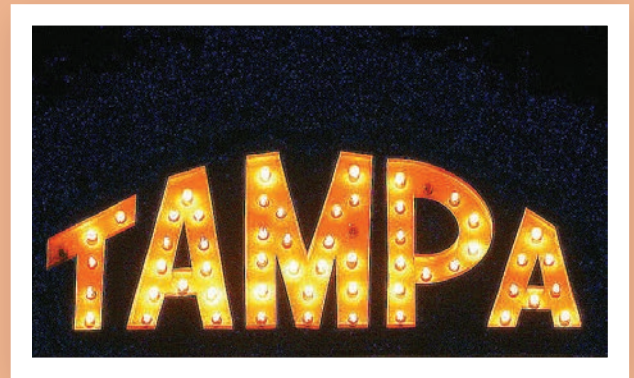
Sunday

The following Sunday morning brought us back to the Tampa Theatre where the annual ATOS meeting was held. New officers were introduced, questions asked by the audience were addressed, and strategies for the next 50 years were discussed.

After lunch, our first performer of the day was Russell Holmes, back at the Tampa Theatre. His extraordinary musical talent gave us great enjoyment and it was a delight to have him here from England.

It was a pleasure to be in the presence of our next featured guest at the Tampa Theatre, none other than Rosa Rio, Florida's own living legend, accompanying the 1922 silent film, *Beyond the Rocks*, starring Rudolph Valentino and Gloria Swanson. Rosa was sensational, attired in a flowing royal purple chiffon evening gown. The organ console was covered in sprays of multi-colored roses. After her performance, a video retrospective of her career was presented. She then briefly spoke, graciously thanking her audience and leaving us with one of her memorable quotes: "When I'm asked my age, it's all about mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter!" At the photo session afterwards in front of the console, organist Donnie Rankin had a photo taken with Rosa. As Rosa and Donnie posed together, ATOS and NYTOS member John Valentino (no relation to the movie's star) announced in his loud Radio City Music Hall voice, "Ladies and Gentlemen, here they are, the young and younger!" Rosa liked that very much.

After dinner at one of Tampa's many fine dining establishments, we returned to the Tampa Theatre to hear another well-respected theatre organist, Ron Rhode. A truly remarkable performance, he ended our evening on a very good note. Anyone who was interested in staying after had the opportunity to attend a jam session, and it proved to be a good turnout.



Left to right: Russell Holmes, Rosa Rio and Ron Rhodes at the Tampa Theatre

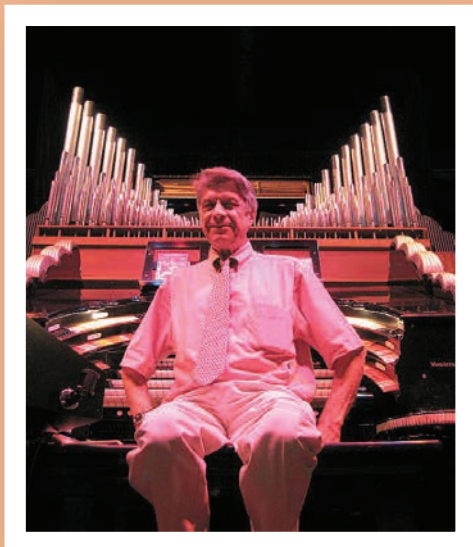
Monday

Monday morning came quickly as I woke up to another sunny, hot, 96 degree day. But this Memorial Day started off with a bang as a special event was hosted by Allen Organ Company with Walt Strony demonstrating what this powerful electronic organ is capable of doing. Well done Walt, especially when you had to perform at 9:00am.

The afternoon took us on another journey on the buses, but no clean windows this time. Just a blanket of squashed love bugs everywhere. We again crossed over the expansive, ever-blue Tampa Bay via the Sunshine Skyway Bridge and reached our destination, the Roaring 20s Pizza & Pipes restaurant in Ellenton. We heard Bill Vlasak play as we gorged ourselves on pizza and beverages. The 4/42 black and gold Wurlitzer console was dazzling as it elevated and revolved at the same time. Its chambers, en Chamade, toy counters and drums were all exposed. Strip lights danced to the rhythms, and mirrored disco balls twirled in the air to flashing colors. Bill Vlasak knew exactly how to play in this theatrical atmosphere, and we were very entertained.

The final event this holiday evening was the ATOS convention banquet and annual award ceremony that took place at the Fletcher Lounge in Plant Hall at the University of Tampa. Formerly the Tampa Bay Hotel, it was built in the Victorian days, circa 1891. It reflects a strong influence of Moorish Revival architecture with numerous minarets and all the bric-a-brac you would expect. It was quite the fantasy place to be at the end of the convention. Everyone enjoyed the fine dining and music performed by organist Karl Cole. After dinner, awards were presented. One prominent award was given to Rosa Rio in recognition of her many years of showcasing the organ and its music. There was a very touching moment when Dwight Thomas received an award. He explained that due to a medical condition with his hand, he could not perform as planned. His emotional speech vibrated throughout the audience as he proclaimed his passion and devotion to this fine instrument which we all love so very much. We wish Dwight well; may he have a speedy recovery.

As we returned to the hotel, goodbyes were exchanged. For many, this marked the end of the convention. But for those remaining, tomorrow would be East Coast day in Florida.



Bill Vlasak at Roaring 20s

Top to bottom: Plant Hall, University of Tampa; Karl Cole plays for the Banquet; Rosa Rio and Fr. Gus Franklin

Tuesday

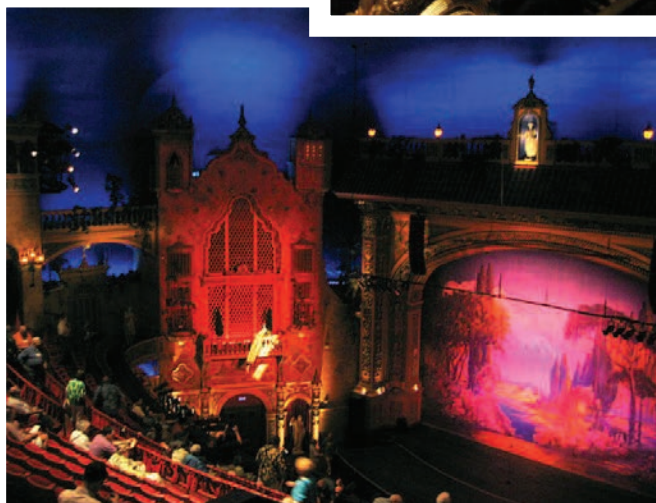
And a very, very long day of travel it was. Leaving early in the morning, we departed Tampa for our first destination, Boca Raton (literally Rat's Mouth) where we visited The Milhous Museum, owned by brothers Bob and Paul Milhous. It features a vast array of vintage cars, carousels, a café organ, a dance organ, a four-manual Walker Digital Organ, pianos, many antique furniture pieces, accessories and fine art and the pièce de resistance, the console of Rudolph H. Wurlitzer's own instrument from his Cincinnati residence. We were pleased to hear the sounds of the Walker and the 3/29 Wurlitzer played by the multi-talented Dave Wickerham, who has recently accepted a position with the Milhous Museum. We were given a gourmet boxed lunch after the performance and proceeded to continue our bus ride south to Miami.

There, we were welcomed into the former Olympia Theatre at the Gusman Center for the Performing Arts. The theatre was built in 1925 with another Moorish style courtyard interior with atmospheric sky, clouds and stars. It is a real gem.

Perched high up in the right balcony opera box was the console of the original 3/15 Wurlitzer. Our organist was Jonas Nordwall. Later he was joined by Donna Parker. Since this was truly the finale of the convention, Jonas could not have played anything better than his last two songs, "The Lost Chord" and "Our Love Is Here to Stay."

It was time to leave Miami and head back to our hotel via a highway that goes right through the Everglades and is referred to as "Alligator Alley." In order to make the long trip a little more bearable, we would try to spot alligators on the side of the road (which we did), watch a typical Florida sunset, or just count the minutes to the next gas station, if there was one. We finally made it back to the hotel, exhausted but unscathed and intact.

As we said our farewells, I reflected upon the three Hs I used to describe Florida. I have to admit, I now describe the Tampa Convention of 2006 with my new three Hs: Heavenly, High-Spirited, and one Hell-of-a good time!



Thanks

At this time, I would like to thank those involved in creating such a successful event. Your hard work and perseverance paid off. Bob Davidson and Mike Kinerk, if it weren't for you two this convention would have never happened. I'd like to personally thank the other convention leaders including Robert Maney, John Fischer and William Shrive. Thanks also to Cliff Shafer, president of the Central Theatre Organ Society, Chuck Pierson, president of the Manasota Theatre Organ Society, and all the officers and members of these two fine organizations. Finally, thanks to the Orlando chapter for hosting the preglow and for the Milhous Museum and the South Florida Chapter for hosting the Florida East Coast Day. All of you dedicated an enormous amount of time, energy and effort to make this convention one that we can keep in our memories for a long time to come.

Left to right: Vintage Automobiles at the Milhous Museum; Olympia Theatre; Dave Wickerham at the Milhous Museum



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Going for the Gold

**ATOS Regional
Convention
November 3-6, 2006**

About EMCATOS

The Eastern Massachusetts Chapter (EMCATOS) holds ATOS charter number one. For many years, chapter concerts were presented on the 2/14 Wurlitzer installed in the Stoneham, Massachusetts Town Hall. This instrument had formerly been installed in the radio studios of WNAC, where it had been broadcast by Francis J. Cronin. In the late 60s, the chapter purchased the 3/13 Wurlitzer from Loew's State Theatre in the Back Bay section of Boston. After a complete rebuild, it was installed in Richard Knight Auditorium located at Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts. Now enlarged to 18 ranks played by a four-manual console and recently tonally regulated by Clark Wilson, the organ now speaks with greater clarity and richness. Our Wurlitzer is presented in both concert and silent film presentations throughout the season.

In November of 2000, EMCATOS presented its first regional convention. Despite the abundance of theatre organ venues in the New England area, no ATOS convention had ever been held in the Birthplace of America. The 2000 event was such a success that the EMCATOS Board of Directors decided to host another regional convention to celebrate the chapter's fiftieth birthday. On November 3, 2006, Going for the Gold, the ATOS 2006 Regional Convention, will kick off with Dave Wickerham at the console of the Shanklin Music Hall 4/34 Wurlitzer.

Our event will offer something for everyone. We will visit five venues, each boasting a Wurlitzer pipe organ. Although we will be doing some traveling, conventioners will be happy to note that the longest ride will be slightly under an hour. We'll travel by first-class motor coach with

handicapped facilities provided. Bus captains, familiar with the area, will be aboard. A boxed lunch will be provided on Saturday noon, and we all will sit for a full-course turkey and roast beef dinner at Babson College on Saturday evening. Attendees of the 2000 convention can attest to the fine quality of the food.

Our host hotel is the Sheraton in Framingham, Massachusetts. Its 383 rooms and choice of restaurants offer much to the traveler. Framingham is located midway between the farthest of our venues, making it an ideal choice. Rooms are comfortable, tastefully appointed and spacious. The hotel offers a continental breakfast each morning. Many additional restaurant choices can be found within a short walk. The hotel will extend the convention rate of \$99 per night through November 6 for those wishing to attend the afterglow.

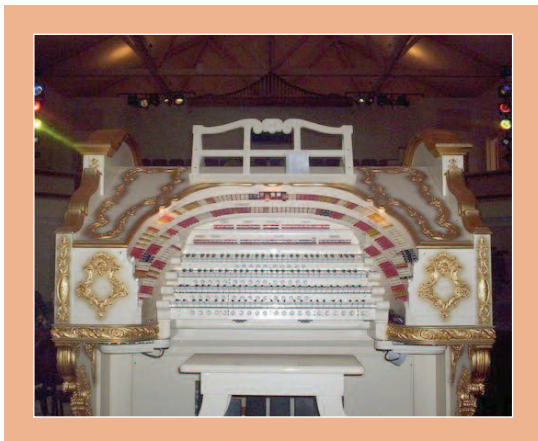
The Massachusetts weather in early November can be absolutely delightful with daytime temperatures reaching 60 degrees and nights dipping to the 40s. The prudent visitor will bring a sweater and jacket along with some lighter clothing for the warmer days. The weather can also be quite cool. As Mark Twain once said, "If you don't like the weather in New England, just wait a minute."

Your EMCATOS Regional Convention Committee recommends that guests fly into Boston's Logan International Airport. A bus service, The Logan Express, offers service from each terminal to Framingham.

Convention registration opens at noon, Friday, November 3, 2006 and closes at 6:00pm.

Compact discs by the various artists will be sold before, during intermission, and after each artist's performance.

About the Organs



The Shanklin Music Hall

Groton, Massachusetts

The instrument to be used for the opening and closing concerts of the convention has clearly made its mark in the theatre organ world. The Shanklin Music Hall organ is a recreation of the 4/26 Wurlitzer originally installed in Boston's Metropolitan Theatre. During restoration, eight ranks were added enriching the ensemble. The four-manual console was originally installed in "The Met" in 1930, and the nucleus of the organ is the 15-rank Style 260 Wurlitzer originally installed in the Palace Theatre in Cleveland, Ohio. Additional components have been carefully selected, bringing the organ up to 34 ranks. All pipework is of Wurlitzer manufacture with the exception of the Trivo Trompette en Chamade. Two pianos are playable from the console: a rare 1927 Mason and Hamlin 7' grand equipped with its original Ampico reproducing player, and a Wurlitzer expressive organ piano.

An important part of the Shanklin Music Hall sound is directly attributable to the space. The room acoustics are similar to that of a small theatre, while preserving the presence of a studio installation. To further enhance the theatrical illusion, the console is mounted on a turntable and all lighting in the auditorium is controlled by a computerized dimming system.

Dave Wickerham will open the convention on Friday evening on this fine instrument. Chamber tours are available after Friday evening's concert.



The Providence Performing Arts Center

Providence, Rhode Island

On October 6, 1928, Loew's State opened its doors in Providence, Rhode Island. This 3,200-seat house was the crown jewel of Providence theatres. It was originally equipped with a four-manual, 20-rank Robert-Morton organ, always a popular feature. By the time Hurricane Carol hit Providence in 1954, the console had been submerged three times in salt water and was beyond repair. The instrument was later removed and installed in a Massachusetts home. Recently the organ was sold and now awaits installation in San Diego, California.

The Providence Journal announced the re-opening of the state's largest theatre on October 29, 1978, and Loew's State was reborn as the Ocean State Performing Arts Center. More recently, the theatre's name was changed to the Providence Performing Arts Center. The facility has undergone a meticulous restoration, and is once again a tribute to the efforts of its architects, C.W. and George Rapp. In 1995, the stage house was expanded, allowing the presentation of the more technically demanding and space-consuming Broadway shows. All seating was replaced with replicas of the originals in the summer of 2005.

The 5/21 Wurlitzer, originally installed in Chicago's Marbro Theatre, was purchased from Byron Carlson in 1981. Bill Hansen and Gary Hanson removed the organ from Byron's Minnesota home and installed it in the theatre in ninety days. The organ, with its impressive console and 21 ranks of original Wurlitzer pipework, is an ideal match for the theatre, visually and tonally. Attendees of *Going for the Gold* will experience a grand combination of sight and sound while listening to Scott Foppiano.



The Phipps' Experience

New Bedford, Massachusetts

In the late 40s and 50s, a number of unwanted theatre organs ended up in churches here in the Northeast. Frequently poorly rebuilt and installed, these instruments often proved to be unsatisfactory. Eventually, many were replaced. Typically destined for the dump, some of these organs were acquired by brothers Don and John Phipps, who would appear on the scene with a little cash and a large rent-a-truck. Eventually, this stash of Wurlitzer parts grew to over fifty ranks of pipes, windchests and mechanism. After many years of storing these parts, the sale of his business in 1990 provided Don with the time and space to restore and assemble an instrument. By 1992 a two-chamber instrument of 12 ranks was installed and playable from a temporary two-manual, church-style console.

Thoroughly engrossed in the project, Don decided to go for broke with the purchase of a Devtronix organ control system and the procurement of a Wurlitzer Fox-style console case from Rich Menacho, of Ukiah, California. Eventually, Trivo, Inc. also supplied four ranks of Wurlitzer-inspired reed pipes and a Trompette en Chamade. The organ now consists of 32 ranks, 29 of which are enclosed in three chambers, and a full complement of traps and percussions.

Ron Rhode will be at the console of this "intimate machine shop" to offer a unique sonic experience.



The Zeiterion Theatre Wurlitzer

New Bedford, Massachusetts

In 1923, the Rudolph Wurlitzer Manufacturing Company delivered a Style F Unit Orchestra to the Zeiterion Theatre in New Bedford, Massachusetts. The organ remained in the theatre until purchased by a private party in the 70s. When that owner passed away, it was donated to the Southeastern New England Theatre Organ Society. Eventually the instrument was returned to its original home and totally rebuilt with a solid-state relay installed. Recently, a re-voiced Oboe (by Trivo) was installed, increasing the organ to its nine ranks. This re-voiced Oboe has the effect of a small Posthorn, adding zest to the instrument without overpowering the ensemble. By the time this article is read, a three-manual console will have been installed. The formal presentation of the console will take place at the convention concert.

The Zeiterion has become a successful performing arts center serving much of southern New England. The theatre is elegant and intimate, with not a bad seat in the house. The Zeiterion Theatre Mighty Wurlitzer is used for concerts, silent movies, and before many of the frequent children's shows. In the last decade, the instrument has been used for almost 700 performances.

The Zeiterion organ was cited July 4, 1995 by the ATOS with a Vintage classification.

Ron Reseigh will return to the Zeiterion Wurlitzer. His performance at the Zeiterion during the last regional was so well received that we asked him to return to dedicate the new console.



The EMCATOS Mighty Wurlitzer

Babson College, Wellesley, Massachusetts

Wurlitzer Unit Orchestra, Opus 1349, was shipped from the factory at North Tonawanda, New York to Loew's State Theatre in the Back Bay section of Boston on May 18, 1926. The organ served well in its role of silent film "orchestra" until the advent of the talking pictures. It was then used only infrequently for intermissions, sing-alongs, and special occasions. Gradually the organ fell into disrepair and the console sat abandoned in the orchestra pit.

In June of 1968, the theatre closed its doors for the last time. A crew from EMCATOS began the job of removing the dormant giant just days before the demolition began. Preserving all wiring intact, 25 EMCATOS volunteers removed the instrument in 23 hours. After two years of rebuilding, our Mighty Wurlitzer was installed in Richard Knight Auditorium on the campus of Babson College in Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts.

1996 marked the successful completion of a ten-year program of expansion and refurbishing of this magnificent instrument. The organ has been updated with a solid-state control system and an English Posthorn, a Wurlitzer-style Brass Trumpet, Brass Saxophone, Voix Celeste, Quintadena, and a second Tibia have been added along with the reinstallation of the original Kinura. The final phase was the installation of a new four-manual console.

Saturday evening, after our roast beef and turkey dinner (included as part your registration package), convention guests will be treated to a performance by Jim Riggs. Jim's enthusiasm is infectious and we know of no better dessert after a great meal than a Jim Riggs concert.

Sunday morning will find us returning to the Shanklin Music Hall. Jelani Eddington and David Harris will work their musical magic at the Shanklin's 4/34 Wurlitzer and the 1927 Mason and Hamlin grand piano.



The New Bedford Whaling Museum

New Bedford, Massachusetts

On Saturday afternoon our guests will lunch at the world-famous New Bedford Whaling Museum. This is the largest museum in America devoted to the history of the American whaling industry and its greatest port. Through exhibits, publications, and programs, the museum brings to life the whaling era and the history of the local area. It houses the most extensive collection of art, artifacts, and manuscripts pertaining to American whaling in the age of sail—late eighteenth century to the early twentieth—when sailing ships dominated merchant trade and whaling. Those who wish may enjoy a fascinating film devoted to the local whaling industry before savoring a tasty lunch. The film and lunch are included as part your registration package.

For questions, e-mail bob@organloft.org or see our web page, www.emcatos.com.

You may register for the convention and book your hotel room on line at: www.emcatosregional.com.

GOING FOR THE GOLD Afterglow

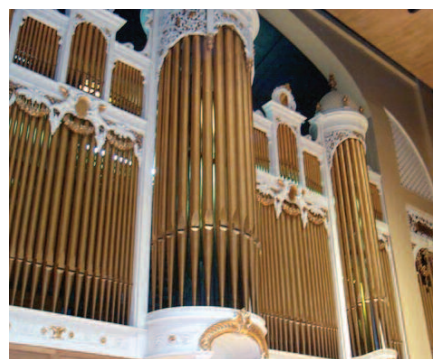
A Down East Maine Pipe Organ Adventure

On Monday morning, November 6, 2006, the lucky convention attendees who opt for the afterglow will set sail for our final adventure, a trip to Maine. New England boasts of many fine attractions, not the least of which are two world-famous romantic pipe organs which we will visit on our journey.

The Methuen Memorial Music Hall Walcher/Æolian-Skinner four-manual, 115-rank concert organ was originally built for the Boston Music Hall, but found a new home in Methuen when the Boston Symphony Orchestra needed more space. The Methuen experience is both musical and architectural. The organ case is spectacular, and the architecture and decoration of the Music Hall's interior has to be seen to be believed. A member of the Music Hall's Board of Trustees will demonstrate the organ for our group. We will have time to admire the furnishings, decorations, and architecture of the

building while listening to the majestic sounds of this world-renowned instrument.

After our Methuen visit, we will board our comfortable motor coaches and journey to Portland, Maine where we will be served a homemade lunch by the ladies of the Portland Masonic Temple. Afterwards, we will walk a very short distance to Portland City Hall and its Merrill Auditorium, home of the magnificent Kotzschmar memorial organ. The instrument was built by Austin Organ Company of Hartford, Connecticut and donated to the City of Portland by publishing magnate Cyrus Curtis. With 102 ranks and a full complement of percussions, this instrument has much to offer musician and listener. The organ and auditorium have recently undergone extensive renovation and refurbishments. A new five-manual console was built by Austin and installed in 2000.



Top to bottom: Merrill Auditorium, Methuen Memorial Music Hall, Foster's.

Bob brings them in at the Orpheum Theatre!

"The Orpheum Theatre recently brought back Bob Ralston for his second performance in less than twelve months. Once again, Bob filled the seats with over 1,000 tickets sold and the theatre walking away with a nice profit. The organ fans were delighted with the show and patrons were asking me to bring him back again next year. Not only can Bob sell tickets for the theatre, he is great to work with. The Orpheum plans to have him back again and again!"

—Kim Steffen, Development Director
Orpheum Theatre, Sioux City, IA



BOB RALSTON

17027 Tennyson Place | Granada Hills, CA 91344-1225
818-366-3637 phone | 818-363-3258 fax
www.BobRalston.com | BobRalston@socal.rr.com

All fees are negotiable,
allowing your chapter to
make a handsome profit.

Some of the most famous organists in history have occupied the bench of the Kotzschmar: Edwin H. Lemare, Marcel Dupré, and Virgil Fox have presided at the console. The Going for the Gold regional convention planning committee gave much thought to who should present this magnificent instrument. One name stood out among all others as the logical choice, Richard Hills.

But here's more! After Richard's concert we're off to the finale of our Down East Maine Pipe Organ Adventure, an old-fashioned clambake with "lobsta and all the fixin's." Our group will travel to York, Maine and Foster's Downeast Clambake. We will dine in Foster's new heated pavilion (sorry folks, but it's a bit chilly out on the beach) and participate in a real New England feast. When we say participate, we mean it. Eating a clambake is a hands-on activity. We're sure you'll be pleased with this dining experience. Foster's is famous for the quality of their food.

We hope you'll join us for a once-in-a-lifetime musical, visual, and culinary experience with our Down East Maine Pipe Organ Adventure.

THE ZEITERION WURLITZER

A Dream Come True

BY BOB EVANS

Located in downtown New Bedford, Massachusetts, the Zeiterion Theatre is the last old-time theatre in a city that once boasted seventeen. Ground was broken on March 14, 1922. Built for the live performance of vaudeville, it opened on April 2, 1923 with *Troubles of 1922* written by and starring George Jessel.

The theatre did not meet with immediate success and soon closed. It reopened in September, 1923 as the State Theatre with a film policy. Five world premieres were held here. One notable event was the 1956 opening of *Moby Dick* with Gregory Peck in attendance.

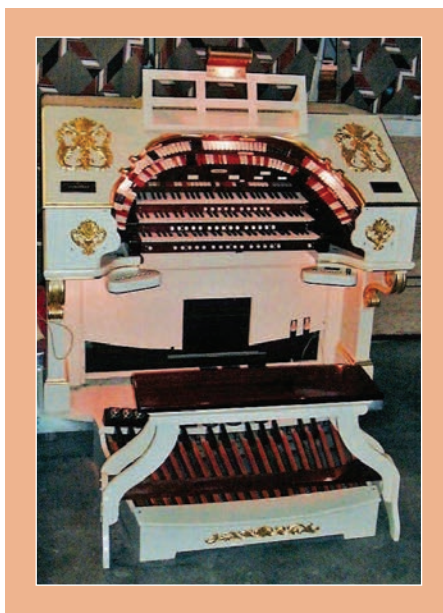
The State was modernized in 1971. Marble walls were covered with wood paneling, chandeliers in the lobby were removed, contemporary rocking seats replaced original leather, and black paint replaced ivory and old rose.

Ultimately, the downtown area ceased to draw people, and the theater closed. A small group of individuals struggled to keep the Zeiterion from the wrecking ball and their efforts led to WHALE's (Waterfront Area Historic League) involvement. The Penler brothers of Paragon Travel donated the theatre section of the building to WHALE in the early 1980s. WHALE provided \$200,000 towards restoration, and it reopened as the Zeiterion Theatre on September 25, 1982, with Shirley Jones in concert.

The Zeiterion Organ

On September 9, 1923, a Wurlitzer Style F Unit Orchestra, Opus #706 left North Tonawanda, New York bound for the State Theatre in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Having fallen into disuse after the advent of sound pictures, the theatre sold the organ to Paul Downing in the mid 70s. He had the instrument carefully removed and then re-installed in his Rhode Island home. When Downing died, he bequeathed the organ to the Southeastern New England Theatre Organ Society (SENETOS), of which he was an active member.

In 1985, Kenneth Duffie, Vice President of SENETOS, wrote to the theatre expressing the society's interest in re-installing the Zeiterion's Wurlitzer. Duffie proposed a long-term, no-cost contract that would enable the organ to return to its original home. Ken's proposal attracted the attention of Earl Dias, a reporter for *The Standard-Times* of New Bedford. In his column of January 13,



1985 "A Look at the Arts," Dias led with the following headline, "A Wealthy Patron Could Return Original Organ." The column eloquently stated SENETOS' desire to reinstall the Wurlitzer. George Grimshaw, a former resident of New Bedford, read Dias' column and offered a \$25,000 matching grant toward the restoration and reinstallation of the instrument. The grant was matched and many other contributors joined the effort to reinstall the Zeiterion Wurlitzer.

Original bids were in the \$30,000–\$40,000 range. As the project progressed, many other unforeseen factors added to the cost of restoration and reinstallation. For example, a new, soundproof blower room had to be constructed over the organ chambers. The original blower room now housed electrical components. The project cost roughly \$125,000 by the time it was completed. Among the changes made to the organ were the installation of a Z-tronics relay system and the replacement of the original console to which a third manual had been poorly added. Over the years, the expenditure has proven to be worthwhile. The "Z" as it is affectionately known, has presented silent films and concerts to showcase the Wurlitzer to the public.

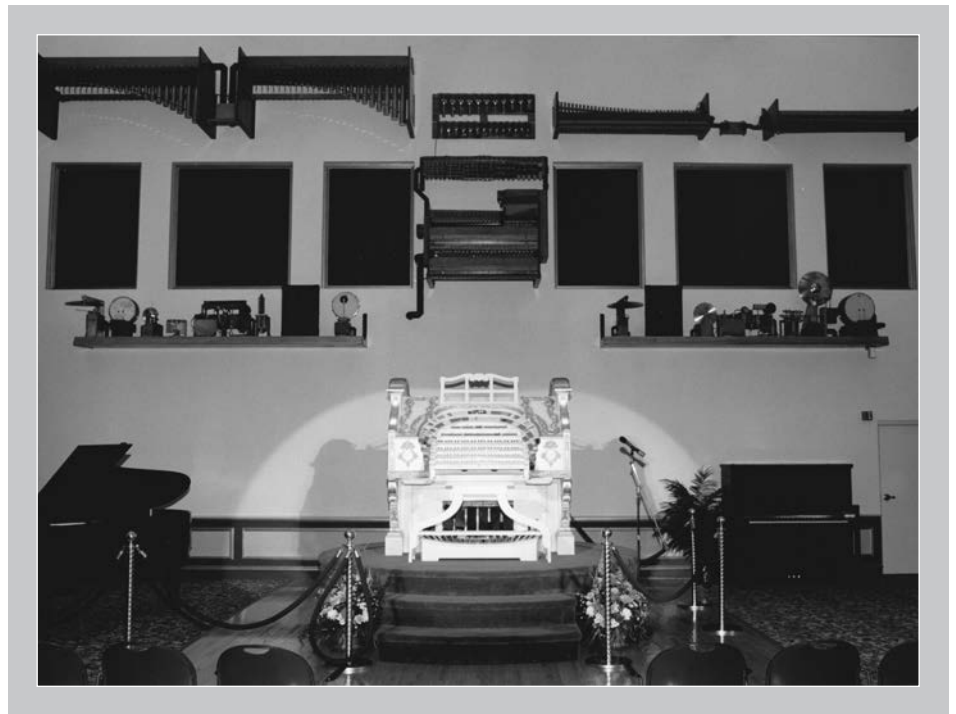
A Dream Completed

Because of the organ's success at the Zeiterion, Ken Duffie began to wonder how the instrument could be made more versatile and player-friendly. Ken heard that a local theatre organ buff had a late, three-manual Wurlitzer console that was surplus to his needs. He remarked how nice it would be to have it for the Zeiterion. Don Phipps thought that the installation of a three-manual console would be a fitting tribute to Ken's devotion to the organ. The console was donated and transported to New Bedford where, after countless hours of toil, it emerged reborn. On June 28, 2006, the new console was ready for the short ride to the Zeiterion to take up permanent residence. Many members of SENETOS and EMCATOS contributed money and time to the project. The project has truly been a labor of love.

Shanklin

BY F. GARRETT SHANKLIN

“In the beginning,
we did not
plan to build
a music hall.”



THE SHANKLIN MUSIC HALL

In the beginning, we did not plan to build a music hall. Our original objective was to enlarge the three-manual, 17-rank Wurlitzer that we have had in our home for many years. But then we realized that simply enlarging the organ would not produce the “in the theatre” sound that we were seeking. To accomplish that, we needed a room with substantial volume for the sound to develop, and that meant that either we had to build a huge addition to the house, or we had to construct a new building. Since neither my wife, Sarah, nor I wanted to change the design and feel of our home, we decided to build a new venue for a new (read “larger”) organ on a six-acre piece of land that was only four miles from our home. I have never been able to shake the desire for an installation with the tonal variety and excitement of a large Wurlitzer in a small theatre. We had to try to duplicate that sound.

In designing the shape of the auditorium, I did not try to copy the shape of a theatre, because theatres were designed to show movies and stage shows, and, in most theatres, any consideration of acoustics for the organ seemed to have been secondary. Instead, we planned an auditorium with approximately the proportions of Boston’s Symphony Hall (which is well known for its fine acoustics), only in miniature. The auditorium of the Music Hall is 44’ wide x 86’ long x 36’ high at the peak of the cathedral ceiling. This gives the auditorium ample volume for the full sounds of the organ to develop, and it approximately follows the ratios of width: height: length of 1 : 1 : 2, that works so well at Symphony Hall. Interestingly, our swell openings, which extend the full width of the auditorium, also mimic the full width stage of Symphony Hall. At the recommendation of our acoustical consultant, we made the rear wall of the auditorium convex, to better distribute the sound.

During the design and construction of the auditorium, a great deal of consideration was given to achieving a stiff, hard structure, which would enhance the sound of the organ. The walls of the building are 12" concrete block, steel reinforced, with foam insulation outside the block, and a vinyl siding exterior. The ceiling is 5/8" sheet rock over 3/4" plywood on 2x12" joists (with fiberglass insulation), supported by over-sized trusses for extra stiffness. As it turned out, these were all great decisions, because after tuning the room acoustically with sound absorbent pads and a bass trap, the auditorium has a reverberation time of about two seconds, and it has proven to be spectacularly good acoustically. Best of all, there isn't a bad seat in the house.

Once the basic structure was up and enclosed, it became obvious that it would be much nicer if we provided some finishing touches to the interior. At this point, Sarah took over the interior design of the Music Hall. In addition to plastering the interior, we designed a paneled column and chase structure along the side walls, which was tastefully trimmed in maroon and gold. The floor of the main area was covered with a carpet bearing a Florentine pattern, and a wood dance floor runs down the center of the auditorium. A 44-seat balcony with reproduction antique theatre seats was built over the reception area, and a projection room is located behind the seating on the balcony.

The organ chambers are located on the upper level directly behind the front wall of the auditorium, and the reservoirs and tremulants are mounted on specially designed racks directly underneath. This arrangement keeps the wind noise out of the chambers, and since the wind piping is run under the ceiling of the regulator room, it keeps the wind conductors off the chamber floors. The organ speaks directly into the auditorium through three openings in the wall in each chamber. The chambers are over-sized for easy maintenance, and to permit visitors to enter the chambers to view the organ's pipework. In a departure from the normal concert hall installation, we decided to mount most of the percussions on the front wall of the auditorium.

The organ console is installed on a turntable near the front of the auditorium. The turntable is mounted on casters, so that the console can be located anywhere in the front part of the room, as long as the electrical cables and wind line will reach. This gives the hall tremendous versatility.

All lighting in the auditorium is controlled by a computerized theatrical dimmer, from a console located on the balcony. The lighting technician has at his control 35 colored spotlights, a follow spot, three video cameras, and a video projector. A 16' motorized movie screen permits movies and video views of the console to be shown, and motorized curtains on all windows allow us to hold daytime events.

Full climate control of the building includes separate systems for each organ chamber, for the auditorium, and for the blower room. The furnace room and sound isolated blower room are in an extension at the rear of the building behind a block wall. This unique project captured our contractors' imagination, and resulted in a very high level of craftsmanship and quality of construction throughout. The building was designed to be almost maintenance free.

“There isn't a bad seat in the house.”

*Facing Page: front of auditorium.
Below: rear of Shanklin Music Hall
and Trompette en Chamade.
(Shanklin Collection)*





“Here, with the original console and all the basic components gathered, was an opportunity to recreate an historic Boston treasure close to its original home.”

THE SHANKLIN MUSIC HALL WURLITZER

The Shanklin Music Hall Wurlitzer consists of 34 ranks of pipes, 11 tuned percussions, and numerous traps and sound effects, all played from the four-manual console that was originally installed in Boston’s 4,500-seat Metropolitan Theatre (presently the Wang Center). It is interesting to note that the Metropolitan organ was the largest theatre organ that was ever installed by Wurlitzer in New England. On April 24, 1999, exactly 69 years to the day after Jesse Crawford played the opening shows on the Metropolitan Theatre’s new Wurlitzer, Ron Rhode, seated at the same console, played the dedication concerts on the newly assembled Wurlitzer in the 350-seat Shanklin Music Hall.

The restoration of the Shanklin Music Hall Wurlitzer was done with two objectives in mind. The first was to create a superb musical instrument. The second and equally important objective was to restore irreplaceable antique materials. In view of this, all of the sounds of the organ are produced by real pipes and real

percussion instruments operated electro-pneumatically, exactly the same way that they were during the golden era of silent film. There are no electronic sounds or sound enhancements. And all the pipes (except for the Trompette en Chamade), all percussions, and all windchests, tremulants, reservoirs, and swell shutters are vintage Wurlitzer. On the other hand, the relay, combination action, and recorder-player, which are transparent to both the organist and the audience, are new solid-state units, which save space and increase the reliability and versatility of the instrument.

As the organ started to approach 30 ranks in size, it became obvious that a large four-manual console would be required to control it. I had long admired the console from Boston’s Metropolitan Theatre, but since this console was being used nightly in the Portland Organ Grinder, we didn’t have much hope of acquiring it. Then one evening, Ron Rhode called to tell me that the Organ Grinder was closing and that the

organ would soon be for sale. I passed this information on to Ken Crome, and a short time later he called to tell me that he had purchased the Metropolitan console along with several other items for our organ.

Unfortunately, when the Metropolitan organ was removed from the theatre, it was broken up for parts. One of only two similar instruments built by Wurlitzer—the Brooklyn Paramount is the other—the “Met” organ was no longer intact as a complete instrument. But here, with the original console and all the basic components gathered, was an opportunity to recreate an historic Boston treasure close to its original home. We already had all 26 ranks of pipes that would be required, plus eight additional ranks that would add richness and versatility to a concert instrument in a smaller hall. We then commissioned Lyn Larsen to design a stop list that would be well unified, easy to play, and that would fit the original stop rails of the Metropolitan console. At this point, our restoration project was off and running!

The Metropolitan Theatre console was expertly restored by the Crome Organ Company, complete with the original electro-pneumatic stop action in the bolsters. Thus, we were able to preserve the satisfyingly positive feel of the original Wurlitzer stopkeys and the characteristic thump of the original Wurlitzer combination action. Syndyne Stop Action magnets were used in the fall board to make room for added stop tabs, and to permit the new solid state combination action to be mounted in the space previously occupied by the fall board blow box. The combination action is a 64 memory Z-tronics solid-state action in which the range for each piston can be instantly set at the console. The console's manuals were restored with ebony sharps and ivory naturals as original. The console was refinished in ivory lacquer, and then the trim and decoration were gold leafed by Peter Achorn of Fire Gold.

Prior to installation, all windchests, percussion actions, reservoirs, and tremulants were completely rebuilt using original style materials insofar as practicable. The wiring, however, was completely redone to conform to the National Electrical Code, and the wind piping is mostly plastic pipe with miter cut elbows so that it looks like the original metal wind conductor. Wind for the organ is supplied by a 25-hp Spencer three-stage Turbine Blower, which was originally installed in the Center Theatre, Rockefeller Center, New York. The blower and motor were rebuilt and dynamically balanced, and the blower now runs surprisingly cool and vibration-less.

The main organ pipe work is installed in two chambers behind the front wall of the auditorium. Wurlitzer Celotex studio-type swell shutters give the organ excellent expression. The unenclosed 32' Bourdon pipes are on the left, and the unenclosed 8' Pedal Tibia pipes are on the right side of the auditorium. The Trompette en Chamade is in the rear over the balcony. Most of the tuned percussions and all of the traps and effects are mounted unenclosed on the front wall of the auditorium, so that they may be seen as well as heard. The percussions can be spotlighted, when desired, for enhanced visual enjoyment.

In addition to the Wurlitzer Pipe Organ, we are fortunate in having two outstanding pianos in the Shanklin Music Hall. The upright is a very late model Wurlitzer theatre organ piano. Unlike earlier organ

WURLITZER THEATRE PIPE ORGAN FOUR-MANUALS, 34-RANKS

MAIN CHAMBER

Tuba Horn	16-8	73 Pipes
Diaphonic Diapason	16-4	85 Pipes
Open Diapason	8-4	73 Pipes
Tibia Clausa	8-2	85 Pipes
Clarinet	16-8	73 Pipes
Violin	8-4	73 Pipes*
Violin Celeste	8-4	73 Pipes*
Viole d'Orchestre	8-2	85 Pipes
Viole Celeste	8-4	73 Pipes
Oboe Horn	8	61 Pipes
Harmonic Flute	4	61 Pipes*
Concert Flute	32-2	109 Pipes
Flute Celeste	4	61 Pipes*
Dulciana	8-4	73 Pipes
Unda Maris	8-4	73 Pipes
Vox Humana	8	61 Pipes
Enclosed Harp		49 Notes
Chrysoglott		49 Notes

SOLO CHAMBER

Tuba Mirabilis	16-8	73 Pipes
English Horn	16-8	73 Pipes
Brass Trumpet	8	61 Pipes
Horn Diapason	16-4	85 Pipes
Horn Celeste	8-4	73 Pipes*
Tibia Clausa	16-2	97 Pipes
Krumet	8	61 Pipes
Kinura	8	61 Pipes
Orchestral Oboe	8	61 Pipes
Brass Saxophone	8	61 Pipes
Solo String	16-4	85 Pipes
Solo String Celeste	8-4	73 Pipes
Gamba	16-4	85 Pipes
Gamba Celeste	8-4	73 Pipes
Quintadena	8	61 Pipes
Solo Vox Humana	8	61 Pipes
Master Xylophone		37 Notes

UNENCLOSED

Pedal Tibia	8	32 Pipes*
Trompette en Chamade	8	61 Pipes*
Marimba / Harp		49 Notes
Vibraphone		49 Notes
Xylophone		37 Notes
Glockenspiel		37 Notes
Cathedral Chimes		25 Notes
Sleigh Bells		25 Notes
Saucer Bells		25 Notes
Upright Piano (Wurlitzer)		85 Notes
Grand Piano		85 Notes
(Mason & Hamlin—Ampico)		
Traps and Effects		
34 Ranks, Total 2429 Pipes		
12 Tuned Percussions, Total 552 Notes		

WURLITZER CONSOLE

4 Manuals, 280 Stopkeys
5 Expression Pedals & Crescendo Pedal
2 Piano Pedals, 2 Swing Out Trays
Organ Relay: Z-tronics
Combination Action: Z-tronics
Recorder—Player: Trousdale

WIND SUPPLY

20 Reservoirs, 14 Tremulants
25 HP, 1150 RPM
Three Stage Spencer Turbine Blower

All components are vintage Wurlitzer, except as noted.

*Ranks added to the original Wurlitzer Publix 4 Specification

Former Boston Metropolitan console now plays the Shanklin Music Hall Wurlitzer (Shanklin Collection)



“The sound of the magnificent Wurlitzer pipe organ in an auditorium built especially for it exceeded our most optimistic dreams.”

pianos, which had no keyboard, our piano does, and it can be played manually, as well as from the organ console. We installed an Ampico vacuum pump in the piano since it is much quieter than the original centrifugal pump.

The grand piano is a 7' Mason & Hamlin Model RBB equipped with its original Ampico reproducing player action. We have been told that there are very few Model RBBs with their original Ampico player action still in existence. This piano will play from Ampico rolls in such a way that the expression (loudness of the notes) is controlled in both the left and the right hands independently. This very closely reproduces the sound of the piano being played by a live pianist. We have adapted this piano so that it can be played from the organ console.

Prior to the installation of the organ, Don Phipps and I built the racks for the reservoirs and tremulants, assembled the blower, and ran the main wind line into the reservoir room. Then, when the organ arrived, Ken Crome and his team, with Don's help, installed the organ in two sessions of about a month's duration each. While this was going on, Allen Miller installed the Z-tronics Relay and the Trousdale Player. Once the organ was playing, Allen, with an able assist from Brant Duddy, voiced and regulated all the pipes. At the same time, Don Phipps was putting the finishing touches on the organ and correcting problems as they showed up. Meanwhile, I was installing the components to “tune” the room acoustically, finishing up the installation of the lighting system, and generally doing whatever was needed to complete the project.

This whole process was fascinating, and it was fun. It took about a year before we knew that everything was working exactly the way it should, but our persistence was well rewarded. The sound of the magnificent Wurlitzer pipe organ in an auditorium built especially for it exceeded our most optimistic dreams. In the years since our grand opening, the Music Hall organ has been played by many outstanding organists. We have been fortunate to be entertained by: Ron Rhode, Tom Hazleton, Rob Richards, Jelani Eddington, Dave Wickerham, Simon Gledhill, David Peckham, Clark Wilson, Phil Kelsall, John Giacchi, Richard Hills, and numerous others. When we see the enjoyment that this Wurlitzer in the hands of a gifted organist can provide for the thousands of people who have attended concerts at the Shanklin Music Hall over the years, we know that all the effort has been worthwhile.

*Top: Main chamber (left to right):
Tibia Clausa 10" wp, Violin Celeste,
Dulciana, Unda Maris, Diaphonic
Diapason, Tuba Horn, Violin.
On left: Vox Humana, Oboe Horn,
Open Diapason*

Center: Main chamber, wood basses.

Bottom: Main chamber, zinc basses.

(Shanklin Collection)



Going for the Gold



ATOS Regional Convention

November 3-6, 2006

HOSTED BY EMCATOS

Friday, November 3

- Convention Registration
Sheraton Framingham Hotel
- Dick Wickerham
Shanklin Music Hall
Groton, Massachusetts
4/34 Wurlitzer

Saturday, November 4

- Scott Foppiano
Providence Performing Arts Center
Providence, Rhode Island
5/21 Wurlitzer
- Lunch at Whaling Museum*
- Ron Rhode
Phipps Experience
New Bedford, Massachusetts
4/32 Wurlitzer
- Ron Reseigh
Zeiterion Theatre
New Bedford, MA
3/9 Wurlitzer
- Banquet*
- Jim Riggs
Knight Auditorium, Babson College
Wellesley, Massachusetts
4/18 Wurlitzer

Sunday, November 5

- Jelani Eddington & David Harris
Shanklin Music Hall
Groton, Massachusetts
4/34 Wurlitzer

AFTERGLOW

Monday, November 6

- Demo by Staff Organist(s)
Methuen Memorial Music Hall
Methuen, Massachusetts
4/115 Walcher/Æolian-Skinner
- Lunch at Portland Masonic Hall*
- Richard Hills
Merrill Auditorium, City Hall
Portland, Maine
Kotzschmar Memorial Organ
5/102 Austin
- New England Clambake*
Fosters, York, Maine

*These meals are included in the registration prices of the Convention and Afterglow.

Hotel accommodations are at the elegant Sheraton Framingham Hotel in centrally located Framingham, Massachusetts.

All convention events, schedules and artists are subject to change or cancellation without notice.

A Big Idea

Ken Double Speaks Out About Ensuring a Sound Future for ATOS



(Photo by Carlton Smith)

“My fears expressed in this missive are those of our dwindling numbers, and what it means five and ten years down the road.”

It doesn't take the skills of a rocket scientist or a senior accountant to realize there is an alarming trend eating away at the American Theatre Organ Society. That trend is decreasing membership across the board, chapter by chapter, in ATOS.

To my thinking, more than finding new organists to play our concerts to ensure the future of ATOS and the music we love, the number one responsibility of our Board of Directors and the leadership of each individual chapter officer, and even each individual ATOS member, must be that of ensuring an audience for the future generations of organists to entertain.

Although I do not have the specific numbers to justify certain claims, clearly the 420 in attendance at the recent Florida convention should be an attendance total that sends shock waves across the organization. And even though the 50th anniversary convention in Los Angeles was considered well attended at approximately 600, there was a time not too long ago that convention planners hoped for 900 or even 1,000 attendees at the annual gathering.

If we acknowledge that our aging organization is not replacing its dying or departing members in sufficient numbers to maintain our membership level, what as an organization can we do?

I would like to put forth a couple of suggestions. First, our hard-working Board of Directors needs to re-think some of the programs and tasks that take up so much time and effort. There is no doubt that each year many individuals are honored, many programs are undertaken or continued to advance the cause; but it seems there is precious little being done specifically aimed at increasing membership.

One suggestion put forth is built around the notion there are too many individual programs taking up too much time, which do not do enough to advance the good work of ATOS. Take a look at your journal. On the page that lists the Board members, and the THEATRE ORGAN staff etc., there are no less than 30 committees listed. These range from E-tones to By-laws, Publications Review to Technical, to four different listings under Youth Initiatives, and on and on. Oddly enough, there is not one specific committee organized to focus solely on increasing membership. Something tells me an awful lot of good people are doing an awful lot of work in an awful lot of areas, except perhaps the most crucial area.

Certainly, a part of the responsibility of membership rests with the individual chapters. Indeed some of the chapters are maintaining attendance or growing. I happen to be a member of two such chapters, Central Indiana and the Atlanta Chapter. Both have lots of organs to hear, and more importantly, both have a long history of solid leadership and an open-armed policy that has members bringing in new members on a regular basis.

At the same time, many chapters have become stagnant, or have a lot of “local” members who for whatever reason have chosen to not have national ATOS membership. I know, I know...that is NOT supposed to happen. But it does.

Now, an idea: What do radio stations do to try and increase listenership? They have contests and prize give-aways in an attempt to lure a new group of listeners to their frequency. I have a contest in mind that might prove interesting.

Divide up the ATOS chapters into three groups according to size, i.e. Group A would be the largest chapters by membership, Group B the mid-range, and Group C the smallest sized chapters. For a period of at least six months, or perhaps one year... convention date to convention date...stage a membership drive/contest. Each chapter

“It seems there is precious little being done specifically aimed at increasing membership.”

would be given a goal based on a 10 percent increase in members. Obviously, the Group A chapters with upwards of 200 current members would be looking to increase membership by at least 20, and so forth.

Now, as radio stations give away prizes and cash to lure listeners, what kinds of prizes and cash might ATOS offer individual winning chapters which increase their membership the most? My suggestion is that there would be two winners in each Group, and an additional special award winner based on merit, be that a small chapter that did exceedingly well, or an individual who might have gone above and beyond the call of duty in finding new members for his/her chapter. That would be a total of seven chapter winners.

The prizes? Cash is King, and perhaps a monetary award would be in order. But I think a far greater reward would be that ATOS pay for the artist fees and travel expenses for a chapter concert. If seven such prizes were to be given away (two winners per Group plus the special award winner totals seven), the financial outlay to ATOS would be approximately \$15,000 based on a \$1,200 concert fee plus current airfare and hotel costs. The winning chapters could offer a list of three artists they would like to hear, and ATOS would then “cut the deal.” This would ensure that not just one particular artist would generate most of the bookings. Fortunately, tastes vary, and one chapter’s favorite player would be different from another, and these dates should be spread around a variety of artists.

The concert would be an event the chapter could rally around, allowing the chapter to make money at an event, and raise awareness of their activities in their community. More importantly, if each chapter gets behind this kind of effort, and ATOS realizes a 10-15% increase in membership, the program would pay for itself in additional dues. Further, it would be my suggestion that this “contest” be

staged every second or third year forward to keep momentum moving forward, and hopefully get membership increased by the thousands.

That’s one idea. Prizes or awards could vary. There are some chapters without an organ available for concert presentation. Perhaps our friends at Allen or Walker might be persuaded to step in and offer a prize for a chapter in that quandary. Perhaps a chapter has an instrument in dire need of work, so perhaps a prize of technical assistance would make more sense. Or, as mentioned, Cash is King, thus some chapters just might want to have \$1,000 or \$1,500 cash to help with a certain ongoing project. There are several ways to award prizes.

I’ll bet this might stir some other thoughts about increasing memberships in ATOS. I hope so. Clearly, we must do something. I have written in the past about marketing and promoting concerts, with ideas aimed at helping advertise and promote events to draw attendance. My fears expressed in this missive are those of our dwindling numbers, and what it means five and ten years down the road.

In ten years, we will have plenty of Jelani Eddington concerts, Mark Herman concerts, and little David Gray of Scotland will be all of 25 years old presenting concerts. I’m not concerned about the future of artists. Lord willing, in ten years I might be presenting my 35th annual concert at Long Center in Lafayette. Will I still draw 500, or will it be a small private affair for the 60 or so who still love the glorious sound of the mighty theatre organ? That’s an interesting question.

Clearly, we have much work to do. Any ideas?

“Will I still draw 500, or will it be a small private affair for the 60 or so who still love the glorious sound of the mighty theatre organ?”



(Photo by Michael Fellenzer)

Fundraising 10

BY SCOTT SMITH

There's probably only one area where Washington and Hollywood agree.

Money.



Nothing happens without it. As the title implies, money talks—and we all know what walks. So many clubs and chapters fall short of successful concert production and restoration funding simply because they don't understand how to go about acquiring supplemental income. Frequently, it seems that those who can only think of reasons not to do something outnumber those who accomplish things. In the big scheme of things, virtually all arts and cultural organizations are struggling with shortfalls in funding, and there is no more “easy money” to be had. Public television and radio stations hold pledge drives and on-air auctions to maintain quality programming. Museums and art galleries rely more and more on their gift shops for survival. Public libraries go head-to-head with used book stores by selling decommissioned and donated books for extra income. It seems that hardly a week goes by that there isn't some organization asking for some sort of contribution. Let's face it: we're all in the same boat together. Today, it's unrealistic to expect ticket sales of any performance art to cover all of the expenses of production. Period. If we expect to be able to continue producing quality concerts with well-maintained organs, we need to add to our bottom lines in any way possible to offset potential losses. While it's sad to say, our society has come to a point where it tends to worship money over everything else. Altruism isn't dead, but it's not feeling very well.

Several years ago, I attempted to hire a professional fundraiser to raise the necessary capital for the Grand Ledge Opera House project. He was generally known to be the most successful fundraiser in the area, particularly for one of the major political parties. His abilities were good

enough that with only a handful of telephone calls, he was able to easily get ten area businessmen to pay \$10,000 each to play golf for an afternoon with a former U.S. president. In our only telephone conversation, I described our project in brief, and without hesitating, he told me that it was simply too small for him. He was, however, generous with tips, ideas and offering a general direction to follow for fundraising. He understood our basic needs and was sympathetic to the cause. Perhaps the strongest point he made that afternoon was to dwell upon the fact that we already had the best of all possible worlds—an historic organ going into an equally historic building. Initially, his rejection of our project was a serious disappointment. Our perfect plan was that he would do what he does best, while we would do what we do best. It didn't work out that way, but in the long run, having to do all of the fundraising ourselves was like anything else. We would learn to appreciate each dollar earned if we had to work for it, just as we would appreciate the quality of the work performed to restore the organ if we did that ourselves as well.

Like any business or arts organization, there is a limit to which we can realistically go in cutting fees and services and still remain in business. An image of being “cheap” doesn't help anyone. A concert or concert season should start out with a budget, listing fixed expenses vs. anticipated income. Previous experiences will tell us what the shortfall might be, and there is our start for filling the gap. There is a vast difference between “how much do we need” and “pass the hat.” Before setting out to raise additional capital, we need a well-thought-out idea of how much we actually need over a given time period.

Happy are those who dream

1: It's all about the money.

So many club members shortchange themselves and their clubs by pinching pennies. They act as if every expenditure was coming directly out of their pockets. We all grew up with the adage: "Watch the pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves." I'm sure this was wise philosophically when it was first coined, but the ante has been upped considerably since then. I'm not advocating a policy of spending wildly in any regard, but in each case, be it a concert series, restoration or expansion project, we need to look at the big picture and respond accordingly. That's why we need supplemental income.

The inverse of fundraising is hoarding. I know of organ (and other types of) clubs with sizeable bank accounts which see hoarding money as their primary goal. They pinch pennies, whine about expenses, and wring hands about dwindling audiences. Whining is a hollow plea, and sets itself up for victorious defeat. Furthermore, a nonprofit with a big war chest really serves no purpose. Hoarding has a long-term negative element that is slow in surfacing, but very real. It lulls club members and concert patrons into a false sense of security. Without expressing a constant need for additional funding, the level of importance in our lives diminishes, leaving us with a sense of complacency. We don't feel "involved." When things seemingly go awry without warning, we always hear the same thing: "Too bad they couldn't save it." The truth is: "they" is actually "us."

The perpetual reliance upon a single, generous donor is another potentially lethal danger. Like a standard of living, both we and our audience become accustomed to certain conditions at a certain level. When the financial rug is yanked out from beneath us, especially if the support is considerable,

confusion and pandemonium can result. It can potentially destroy your concert series and ultimately your organization. Here today...gone tomorrow.

Like a business, a concert-producing organization's credibility rides the crest of a wave called stability and integrity. Ultimately, it reflects on those who direct it. Old-school thinking tells us to simply "make do" with what we have, but I submit that there is nothing wrong with expressing need. This is not about pride. This is about survival.

We must accept that we live in an ever-changing world. Our overly stimulated society now seems to expect a higher degree of entertainment in every performance of any kind. Today's audiences are more reluctant to commit to a whole season of anything than ever before. While an increasing amount of spendable income is being spent on entertainment, the "pie" is much larger than ever, offering an ever-increasing variety of fun and interesting things to see, hear and do. As stewards of the art of the theatre organ, our job is twofold—to educate and to entertain. Concerts need to be more than a high-wire act at low level. Our job is to give them what they need, as much as what they want. Furthermore, realistic goals need to be defined, and if you find that you're not achieving them, use the business school directive. Don't get new goals. Get new people. That is to say, there is nothing wrong with moving people around to different committees and different jobs until you get it right. Just try to get it right the first time.

If you're serious about committing to a strong future and long life for your organization, I'd like to recommend that you establish a perpetual Fundraising

Committee. As the two chief financial officers, the chairman and treasurer should always be members. Salespeople and interested parties who have run successful businesses can be especially helpful. In a nutshell, the committee's function is to create, schedule, produce and manage fundraising events, both large and small. They need to know that marketing and fundraising go hand in hand, and they should be instrumental in performing those tasks as well. Once they have well-defined goals, there is no limit to what they can do, but in a perfect world, they will need the assistance of every single member in your club in some way. This is serious fun, folks. Back in the day, organ concerts seemed to just "happen" and financial risk was minimal. Today, it's a different story. If we want them to continue, thrive and even grow, we need to plan for a solid future by setting the stage today.

In the coming issues, fundraising ideas will be presented here with a given method with which to approach each one. Other methods can be employed to accomplish essentially the same thing. There is something of a risk-return ratio with each one, but, with little exception, the return is generally proportional to the amount of work required for each task.

If I can leave the reader with one single thought after reading this series, it is that fundraising is not a one-time thing. Once begun, it needs to be perpetual. So long as your organization is active, you need supplemental income. Did you ever offer a contribution to an organization that turned it down because they already had too much?

dreams, and are willing to pay the price to make them come true. —Anonymous

A Grand Tour

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July 1–5, 2007

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June 30 (tentative)**

**Afterglow—Dickinson High School,
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This will be an unprecedented opportunity to stay in the world's most exciting city, New York. Our headquarters hotel is the fabulous Marriott Marquis located at the crossroads of the world, Times Square. From this base of operations, we will launch our Grand Tour of the Mid-Atlantic States featuring theatre and orchestral pipe organs that many of you have been waiting years to hear.

You are cordially invited to see and hear some of the finest organs and auditoriums in the Mid-Atlantic States. ATOS will produce this event in July next year.

One way or another, we will get you into the most glamorous and famous theatre in the world, the Radio City Music Hall. We will tour the facility, and if everything falls into place, you'll hear a concert on the 4/58 Mighty Wurlitzer that you will never forget.

Also we will see the legendary Loew's Paradise theatre in the Bronx. It is newly restored and open again. It is dazzling indeed, but sadly its organ chambers are empty. So we will fill the room with sounds from an Allen or a Walker digital theatre organ and enjoy it all the same.

In Manhattan, just blocks from the Marriott and on fabled Park Avenue, sits the historic Saint Bartholomew's Church, with one of the largest pipe organs in the world, a 5/170 Æolian-Skinner. We will hear a concert that you'll talk about for years.

Our Grand Organ Tour will include theatres and organs in many surrounding cities, including the Paramount in Middletown, New York, with its own 3/12 Wurlitzer.

We'll hear the "Ben Hall Memorial" 2/11 Wurlitzer at the Lafayette Theatre in Suffern, New York; the Broadway Theatre 3/8 Kimball in Pitman, New Jersey; and undeniably one of the largest theatre organ consoles you'll ever see anywhere, the 3/16 Möller at the Trenton War Memorial Auditorium in New Jersey's capital.

A very special part of the Grand Tour will be a visit to the organ at Ocean Grove, New Jersey. Originally built in 1908, it has been enlarged and is now four-manuals and 165 ranks. At the nucleus of this famous instrument is the original Robert Hope-Jones pipework. The very name means "theatre pipe organ." This will surely be a thrill for all of us.

Next our tour takes us up the Hudson River to one of America's most historic sites with one of America's most historic organs. It's the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, with the incredible Möller organ, 325 ranks!

What could top that? How about a visit to see the world's largest pipe organ? It's the Midmer-Losh in famed Atlantic City Municipal Auditorium. This will be offered as a preglow excursion in the Grand Organ Tour. Remember, this is a tour only, not a concert. As you know this giant 449-rank organ unfortunately is not playable. But haven't you always wanted to see it? The console is bigger than some rooms, and it's the world's only seven-manual organ.

Another option will be New York City's Circle Line cruise ships. This will be provided as a way to view the July Fourth fireworks show from the harbor and river. This most important U.S. national holiday falls right in the middle of our convention.

The fun doesn't stop when the tour ends. Stay another day and participate in the fantastic afterglow we have planned. It will start with an afternoon at the Dickinson High School in Wilmington, Delaware, with its 3/66 Kimball organ originally from the old Boyd Theatre in Philadelphia, and greatly expanded.

And speaking of Philadelphia, we will end up there for the truly grand finale in the Grand Court of the former Wanamaker Department Store, now operated by Macy's. Here we will hear concerts on the largest playing pipe organ in the world, with its wonderful orchestral divisions, including 100 ranks of strings.

And who will play the exciting organs in the Grand Organ Tour?

- Walt Strony
- Jelani Eddington
- Ron Rhode
- Dan Bellomy
- Clark Wilson
- Cameron Carpenter
- David Gray—sensational wee Scottish young organist from the 2006 Florida convention
- Carlo Curley—back by popular demand after his 2005 Los Angeles convention triumph, and last but not least
- Simon Gledhill

Plan now to attend. This is the ATOS convention of a lifetime. It's the convention YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MISS—July 1 through 5, with preglow June 30 and afterglow July 6. See you there!

NOTE: Arrangements are not finalized. All events and artists are subject to change without notice.

NOTE: The New York Theatre Organ Society is not involved in the organization, sponsorship, or running of the convention, except it is making the organs that are owned and maintained by NYTOS at the Paramount in Middletown, New York, and the Lafayette Theatre in Suffern, New York, available to convention participants for concert performances. They have asked us to let you know.

What a TOUR! What a LINE-UP!
What a sensational convention!

Rebuilt organ makes its debut in a sneak preview concert.

BY DON HANSEN

Trenton Möller Rises to New Heights



Jim Kozak at the Trenton War Memorial (Photo by Tony Rustako)

The Trenton War Memorial and its 3/16 Möller organ has been the center of our New Jersey concert series for over 30 years. In 1996, the theatre was closed for renovation and the organ was inaccessible for repairs or maintenance for several years. When the theatre was re-opened, it was obvious that the organ was in poor condition and needed major work. Its last public performance was in November of 2002.

The Patriots Theatre in the War Memorial, as it is now called, was totally restored by the state of New Jersey and is an outstanding 1,900 seat venue in Italian Renaissance style. While never a movie palace, it is a well-executed, general-purpose theatre and is impeccably maintained. It serves as an active performing arts center in addition to providing a venue for many official state activities. The Möller organ has been a major attraction of the War Memorial since the mid-1970s when it was transplanted from the nearby Lincoln Theatre by the Garden State Theatre Organ Society. In addition to concerts, the organ is played at most official state functions.

Prior to the recent rebuilding work, the tremulants in the Möller had been disappointing. They frequently stalled under full registrations and didn't do justice to the beautiful pipework of the organ. The decision was made to install new tremulants upon the recommendation of organ technician Brant Duddy, who also worked his legendary voicing magic on the organ.

In addition to replacing aging leather in chests and regulators, and rebuilding swell shade motors, the console received much needed updating. The keyboards were rebuilt, the keys recovered, and additional general and divisional pistons were installed. These, together with 16 levels of memory, give artists greatly enhanced flexibility. The organ now breathes through an almost new 15-hp

Spencer blower. Four ranks of pipes in the solo chamber were reconditioned by A.R. Schopp's Sons, Inc.

After more than three years of tedious labor by crew chief Jason Taylor and his small crew, as well as the considerable expenditure of funds provided by GSTOS, the organ made its debut in a sneak preview concert. On Sunday, June 25th, under the talented fingers of organist Jim Kozak of Houston, the console rose from the pit in all its glory. It became immediately evident to all who remembered the former sound of the Möller that it was no longer the instrument it was four years ago. Seeing the gleaming cream and gold console appear for the first time after such a long wait was a dream come true.

All the hard work didn't disappoint. Jim's program gave the organ a good workout, and it performed magnificently. There was no evidence of wind sag during the entire performance. Overheating was also no longer a problem. At the end of the two-hour concert, the Möller could have been played without tremulants and been in fine tune.

Jim's program included two great marches, a few pieces from the 20s, and assorted other goodies all in refreshing, original arrangements. For his wonderful performance and friendly stage presence, Jim was rewarded with two standing ovations.

We want to thank Brant Duddy, Allen Miller, Clark Wilson and other professionals in the theatre organ world for their indispensable advice and work. Above all, we extend sincere appreciation to Jason Taylor and his crew for their dedicated efforts and to Jim Kozak for a sterling performance.

Our next concert will be the official rededication on October 22, featuring Bob Ralston. For more information about GSTOS, please visit our web page at www.gstos.org.



The Music Box Makers, The History of the Music Box in Ste. Croix

Jean-Claude Piguet's compilation of two separate works chronicles the development of the musical box industry in the Ste. Croix region of Switzerland. Beginning in the early 1800's before mass communication and electricity were common and continuing through to the age of assembly lines, this fascinating story describes the erratic fortunes of the people who were involved, their companies, and the social and economic climate they endured. An outstanding and important work, originally in French, now in English.

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Professional Perspectives

“State of the Union” By Edward Millington Stout, III

For the past several years the debate over the future of the theatre organ continues in various forums. If one is connected to the “theatre organ list” on the Electratone Highway, opinions are coughed up on a continuous two-ply basis. Most members could benefit from having a re-it relay connected to their computer’s delete key. This brief elucidation shall focus on the link between the theatre organ’s present state and its past. There are ample opportunities to comment on the debate over the “purist’s” position concerning historical preservation in contrast to embracing every form of modern, but fleeting technology.

The theatre organ’s position in the musical world was somewhat short in comparison with other disciplines. We who love the theatre organ tend to lose sight of why and how the theatre organ developed. It is common belief the theatre organ was developed by the Wurlitzer Company to be a substitute orchestra for silent films. That is not the case, as Famy R. Wurlitzer first believed the Hope-Jones organ would be suitable for replacing pit orchestras in American playhouses. In the year 1910, the silent feature film was still in its development stage in terms of exhibition. Adolph Zukor, who established the Famous Players organization, was largely responsible for the creation of the true “feature” length film. He also was convinced the future of the motion picture was dependent on attracting the middle class audiences.

It is an established fact the turning point for Wurlitzer was in 1914 when word of the success of the new Liberty Theatre in Seattle spread throughout the new industry. The Unit Orchestra was now considered to be essential in supporting the presentation of feature films. The key word here is supporting and the Unit Orchestra soon attracted large numbers of inventive and talented musicians. During the golden age of the theatre organ, most music conservatories had “Theatre and Concert”

organ departments. It was not uncommon for distinguished organists to play classical venues as well as positions in the entertainment world. Uda Waldrop, appointed official civic organist for San Francisco in 1921, played both classical/concert and theatre organs on a regular basis. In fact, in 1924 he played weekly recitals at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor as well as a weekly theatre organ program on station KPO.

The theatre organ was not without its detractors, most of which held esteemed blue blood positions within the cloisters of the aristocratic church organ field. That is somewhat understandable, as the theatre organists were considered community celebrities and they enjoyed considerably more income. Fortunately many of the negative feelings have dissipated after passing through the restricted filter of the pinched Neo-Baroque era of the 1960s when organs played on seepage.

The melody-rich popular music of the 1920s and 30s was well suited for the theatre organ due to its outstanding symphonic resources. The Wurlitzer organ was the perfect instrument for allowing Jesse Crawford to create transcriptions of hit tunes of the day. Crawford’s popularity was unmatched through the release of the famous Victor recordings, which also directly promoted the Wurlitzer product. Solo recordings made an outstanding comeback with the release of the George Wright HI FI series. George Wright’s sense of arranging and his unique ability to homogenize the Crawford ballad style with the upbeat bands of the day, catapulted him into the position of a true superstar. The two-hour solo concert, which continues to this day was a happen-chance fluke.

A colorful San Francisco promoter thought it might be possible to have a midnight concert for some “organ buffs” at the San Francisco Fox Theatre, where two or three hundred mixed nuts might show up at that late hour. Al White contacted the

theatre and George Wright to see if the late-hour event was possible. The theatre and George agreed for a modest fee and then Al bought air time on the very popular FM station KPEN, a station that played George Wright HI FI recordings every day. Well, at 10:30pm 4,600 persons circled the Fox Theatre block waiting for the seventeen patrons to leave the late show. That history-making concert was the true beginning of the “two-hour personality concerts.” George Wright’s disciples continued the tradition for the next 40 years, but the melody-friendly events largely spoke to patrons with civilized behavior and they, too, are joining their friends in the line around the Fox Theatre.

At this point we must return to the word “support,” the connection between the theatre organ’s past and its future. There can be no contention about the theatre organ’s outstanding ability to musically support an event. Its superior orchestral voices, expression and real percussions will support almost any demand. Several successful motion picture theatres feature their Mighty “What Ever” in different roles. The wonderful Stanford and Castro Theatres in Northern California use their Wurlitzer organs seven nights every week and the patrons would go up in arms if the organs fell silent. Speaking of silents, the theatre organ is rapidly reclaiming its true and original crown in providing orchestral scoring for vintage photoplays. In the hands of a master, there is no other entity that supports a film presentation as well. Some try amplified pianos, some try small orchestras, but nothing approaches the majesty and appropriateness of well-voiced theatre organ. The next question should be: Will there be a next generation of truly dedicated photoplay organists? There are plenty of very talented young organists, but will they be able and willing to deflate their egos just enough to allow for the marriage of the music and the film? Let us hope that will be the case.

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For the Records

REVIEWS

SOMETHING WONDERFUL

Jelani Eddington

Something Wonderful, the new offering from Jelani Eddington, is a welcome addition to the CD shelf. As usual, Mr. Eddington plays with complete mastery over both instrument and material. The selections on this release are for the most part standard theatre organ fare, but the artist puts a fresh face on some very familiar, even over-familiar, repertoire.



Compact discs, cassettes, videos, books, and music to be reviewed should be sent to the Editor, Jeff Weiler, 1845 South Michigan Avenue #1905, Chicago, IL 60616. Items must be received three months prior to the issue date in which the review will appear.

In places his playing shows real originality outside the usual “organists’ bag of tricks.” We find elegant ornaments in places where organists don’t usually place them: an octave higher or lower, in an unexpected tone color, or a subtle turn of phrase—very nice indeed.

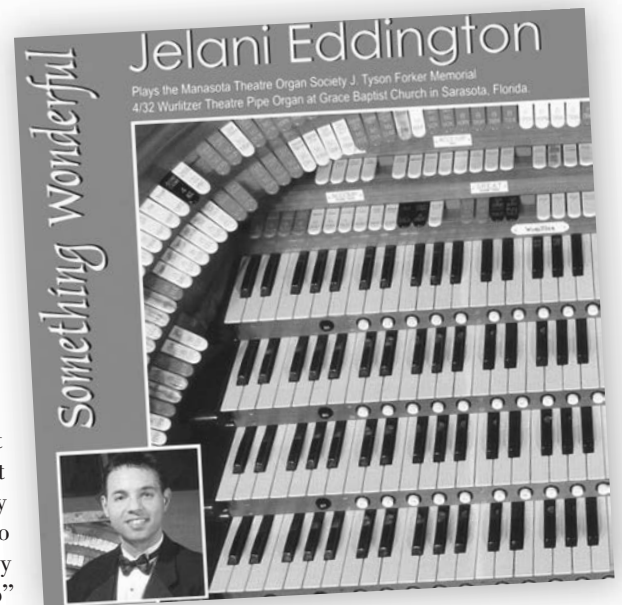
Mr. Eddington opens with “Everything’s Coming Up Roses,” a theatre organ chestnut if ever there was one. This tune comes in at number two on the “all time hit parade of console raisers,” bested only by the everlasting “There’s No Business Like Show Business.” My initial inclination was to press “skip” and move on, but something caught my ear and I stopped to listen. It’s played cleanly, energetically, and with an original flair. Even so, the tune remains and evermore shall remain “Everything’s Coming Up Roses.”

“What Are You Doing The Rest Of Your Life?” escapes the curse of over-familiarity. It’s a good tune which seems to have gotten lost by most of us. Those of us who saw *The Happy Ending* have remembered Barbra Streisand’s rendition of the Legrand tune long after we’ve forgotten the somewhat dreary picture attached to it. Streisand gave it an understated performance, allowing the plaintive little melody to speak for itself. Eddington has a different take on it, giving the tune a drama it probably doesn’t deserve. At almost eight minutes, the song, frankly, is over-played and over-produced.

Having said that, I must add that it is in this tune that we hear the lovely small combinations and fine solo voices this instrument possesses.

The medley from *The King And I* is notable for “We Kiss In A Shadow.” Like “What Are You Doing...” it suffers from being over-played, but displays the solo voices I wish were more in evidence throughout.

Everyone loves Zez Confrey, and as a display of manual dexterity “Dizzy Fingers” fills the bill. It’s snappy and well played. “Dizzy Fingers” also has become a bit of a chestnut, however, and I would have



preferred to hear one of Confrey’s less-often heard (but equally entertaining) compositions.

Where Mr. Eddington’s fine talent is most apparent is in the *Swan Lake* transcription. He captures the orchestral feel of the music without being bound to the exact voicing in the score.

Attempting to duplicate in detail an orchestral score is usually futile for an organist, and Mr. Eddington wisely avoids the trap. He chooses instead to translate the music into the organistic medium and gives a thoroughly musical and satisfying performance.

The Wurlitzer organ in the Grace Baptist Church is a fine example of neo-Wurlitzer practice. The tuning and regulation are immaculate, and the up-close, in-your-face presence of the organ is unmarred by unpleasant action and wind noises.

Something Wonderful suffers from too many “big” songs, each with its obligatory big finish, but all-in-all it is well done and certainly worth hearing.

CD only, \$20 U.S. postpaid, available from the Manasota Theatre Organ Society, 8000 Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota, Florida 34241. Checks and money orders are to be made payable to MTOS. Outside the U.S. please add \$5 per disc. Additional information at www.mtos.us.

— Stanley D. Hightower

PREMIERE Mark Herman

In a world where mediocrity so often gets rewarded with fame, it's reassuring to know that there are still young musicians out there who want to do better. It is my privilege here to review the debut album by a young theatre organ stylist who, I am sure, will become a major icon in our field.

Right from the opening track "Cherokee," it becomes obvious that Mark Herman's new album *Premiere* is a solid winner. Mark plays with authority, imagination, and feeling—an element too commonly missing from most young musicians.

Mark was born in Indiana, a state that has recently produced several fine theatre organists. This is due mainly to the presence of the "teacher of the stars," John Ferguson. A well-known and respected musician in his own right, John has spent his recent years devoted to enriching the musical lives of some of our most talented younger players during their all-so-important formative years. John now has yet another reason to be proud.

For this recording, Mark chose the wonderful Page organ at the Embassy Theatre in Fort Wayne, an instrument I remember nostalgically from the many midnight concerts by Buddy Nolan years ago. It is truly one of the great sounds in the American Midwest. Over the years, this instrument has received much loving attention by expert technicians. Fortunately, the temptation to make it into yet another generic Wurlitzer has been resisted. It has lovely Tibias, wonderful sizzling Strings, and great Reeds. Its ensemble is unique, but very musical.

Of particular note is the "Krum-kin," an unusual rank that reminds me (fondly) of the Krumet Horn from John Seng's Mundelein organ. When played off-trem, it sounds like a naughty-but-refined cross between a Kinura and Krumet, with an English Posthorn accent. When played with the tremulant on, as it is during the verse of "Who," it turns into Ethel Merman as a snake charmer en Chamade. What fun!

Too many younger stylists feel compelled to show us how many notes they can play. It is true that Mozart was (wrongly) criticized for having "too many notes." However, he also knew how to be elegant, refined and

understated. Along these lines, there is a reason why rests exist in music. Not every rest needs to be filled with a chime, harp arpeggio, choke cymbal, bass drum or other musical device (or cliché). The famous architect Mies van der Rohe was correct when he said that "less is more."

While Mark has an excellent technique and is fully capable of playing many notes, he already has the maturity to keep things simple when appropriate. This allows the music to breathe and for us to catch our collective breaths. It has been a rare occasion where I've heard someone so young play ballads with such feeling. His "When Your Lover Has Gone" is especially well played. It features lovely harmonies and a "singing" right hand, the likes of which we rarely hear from anyone under the age of 35.

When I first came onto the scene, I had frequent correspondence with the late Billy Nalle. No one could deny that Billy had a definite style that was all his own. He constantly encouraged me to "be my own man." This was some of the best musical advice I ever got. Billy loathed the many people who copied George Wright note-by-note instead of being original.

However, it is almost impossible from the get-go to be 100% original. Most of us combine our influences and eventually develop our own style. For example, consider my colleagues—Lyn Larsen, Jonas Nordwall and Tom Hazleton—all of them were heavily influenced by Wright but eventually blossomed into having styles totally unique to each. When listening to their recordings, there is no mistaking who is playing.

In Mark's playing, one can identify many influences. I find it invigorating to hear him exploring both traditional and modern theatre organ stylings while formulating his own unique 21st-century approach. He is definitely on the road to becoming his own man. As wonderful as this is, and knowing what I know about how such young talent develops, I can promise you that more great things will come from this artist. I, for one, can hardly wait to hear what comes next.

I sincerely hope that theatre organ fans everywhere will embrace this young artist and give him the encouragement that he so rightly deserves.

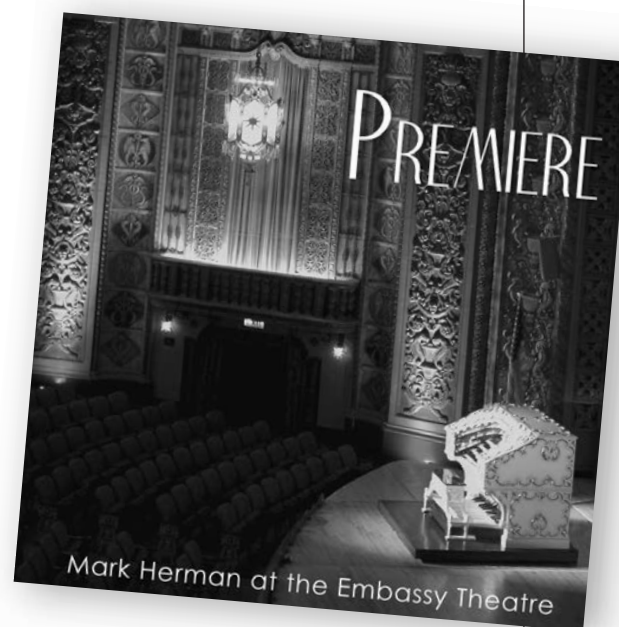
This CD comes with a wonderful commemorative booklet with much background information on the artist, music, instrument and theatre. The recording by Robert Ridgeway and Chris Gorsuch faithfully and commendably captures the big-room sound of this instrument while keeping all its clarity.

I highly recommend this album for every collector of fine theatre organ music.

Selections: "Cherokee," "Babes In Arms Selections," "Body and Soul," "It's Today," "When Your Lover Has Gone," "Oklahoma! A Symphonic Celebration," "My Funny Valentine," "A Salute to Americana," "Skylark," "A Jerome Kern Musical Portrait," and "Embassy Theme."

The CD may be ordered for \$20 (postpaid in the U.S.) and for \$23 elsewhere from Mark Herman Productions, LLC, P.O. Box 5059, Ft. Wayne, Indiana 46895 www.MarkHermanProductions.com.

—Walt Strony



For the Records

THE MELODY LINGERS ON John Seng

Where does a person begin to describe the towering talent that belonged to Brian John Seng? In the short history of the theatre organ there have been a few people who made fundamental changes in the way the instrument was played, and even in the way it was understood. Jesse Crawford was one of those and George Wright was another. John Seng was a third. Anyone playing the theatre organ today who says he was not influenced in one way or another by these three men is mistaken, for each of them gave us sounds that had never before been heard.

Certainly one of the most controversial organists of the modern age, Seng invariably trusted his own musical instincts and was never dissuaded by what others thought. He was a musician first, an organist second, and if he had been cast away on a desert island with only a tin pan and a wooden spoon to strike it with, Johnny would have made his own kind of music. Love it or hate it, his music stands apart.

He was far too tall to sit comfortably at a console and always assumed a peculiar crouched position that looked uncomfortable and no doubt was. His foot was so wide he had to turn it to one side in order not to play more than one note. How he managed to play at all is amazing to me, but play he did, and this CD is proof.

Seng professed a love of the theatre organ in its "factory original" state, unaltered by latter-day tinkerers, but when it came to assembling the organ at Mundelein, he designed an instrument that's not a theatre organ at all, but a "Seng organ." Mundelein was built by Seng and for Seng, and it stands apart in this recording like Seng himself. To borrow his own adjective, Mundelein was "hot."

The music you hear on *The Melody Lingers On* did not spring forth full-formed like Aphrodite from the sea, but was carefully prepared and rehearsed. Seng practiced several hours every day, and in the last months of his life he had acquired the orchestral score for *Of Thee I Sing*, and was working out his transcription. I'm sorry I will never hear a finished version of that one.

Johnny and I were friends for 25 years. We met at a New Year's Eve party way back when he was consulting for the Wurlitzer Company and I was managing the Chicago Theatre. In recent years, when we were both living in Chicago again, I would often hear that unmistakable gravelly voice on the phone: "Hey, you want dinner? Meet me at Howard Street Station and we'll get a pizza." I miss him.

From the phrenetic "Powerhouse" to the wistful "If," from the buoyant "Fiddle Faddle" to the carefully orchestrated "La



Valse," *The Melody Lingers On* displays the workings of a powerful musical mind, so listen carefully. Also included are "Love Song," "Girl Talk," "We've Only Just Begun," "Pick Yourself Up," Suite from *Nutcracker*, "On a Clear Day," and "People." Listen and enjoy. Then listen and learn, for John Seng was a cut above the crowd.

The CD is available for \$23 (postpaid in the U.S., Canada and Mexico) and for \$26 elsewhere from Pipe Organ Presentations, 68022 Grandview Avenue, Cathedral City, California 92234 or on the web at www.pipeorganpresentations.com/order.html.

—Stanley D. Hightower

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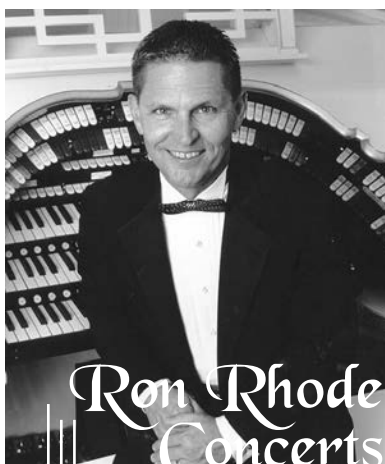
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Chapter News



Dairyland: Jelani Eddington, Ron Reseigh, and Chris Gorsuch at the Bieck residence (Photo by Gary Hanson)

DAIRYLAND

Racine/Milwaukee, Wisconsin—Dairyland's annual spring concert was held May 21 at the Weill Center for the Performing Arts in Sheboygan, where the organ is a 3/12 Kimball. The guest artist was Jelani Eddington. Included in his program were a few numbers by Leroy Anderson. Jelani explained that he has always loved Mr. Anderson's music, and he wanted to record all of his music on the theatre organ. He contacted Leroy Anderson's widow, was invited to her home, and had a delightful visit. Later on she sent him two compositions that had been written by her husband for the organ. These works had never before been performed or recorded, and Jelani played one of them for us. After the intermission he accompanied the silent film, *Saturday Afternoon*, starring Harry Langdon.

Our June social was held on the 25th at the Elkhart Lake home of Gary and Nancy Bieck. Gary is constantly working on the organ, which is a three-manual Wurlitzer, and it now has a new Z-tronics combination action. Gary also has a love for flowers, and in order to get to the music room we had the pleasure of walking through his beautiful gardens. The artist was Ron Reseigh, who is organist at the Organ Piper Restaurant in Milwaukee. Ron played appropriate music for the month of June, and it was a delight to our ears. Open console followed the pot-luck meal. In attendance were Jelani Eddington and Chris Gorsuch from San Diego, California. They both came forward at open console time, so we were treated to more music by two professional organists. Dairyland is so lucky to have organists of such high caliber attending our socials. So, in a way, we had three concerts rolled into one.

— Sandy Knuth
Gary Hanson, President
414-529-1177, orgnpijr@aol.com

EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Wellesley, Massachusetts—On May 14, 2006, the Eastern Massachusetts Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society officially began its fiftieth birthday celebration year with a party in Knight Auditorium at Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts.

Loyal member Charlie Briggs sponsored a concert by rising theatre organist, Mark Herman. This is the second time in a year that Charlie has demonstrated his generosity and willingness to promote young artists in concert. Mark's program was varied, including everything from ragtime to Broadway. This young man's style is unique and his phrasing impeccable. We expect much from this newcomer to the theatre organ scene, and look forward to a return engagement.

Guests were invited to attend free of charge. The snack table was laden with goodies. Our audience numbered about 150, and the celebration was a fitting way to kick off our Diamond Jubilee year.

Our chapter was well represented at the annual convention in Florida over Memorial Day weekend. Ten members enjoyed the sunshine and the marvelous lineup of artists. We met new friends and renewed acquaintances. Congratulations to the sponsoring chapters on a job well done. We appreciate how much time, effort, and planning goes into a convention. The high point of the convention for us was the awarding of the ATOS Technical Award to charter member Don Phipps. Don is a master technician, wood-worker, and machinist. He is most deserving of this recognition.

Speaking of planning, our upcoming regional convention, *Going for the Gold*, is in the final stages of preparation. We have assembled a roster of artists that is second to none and our instruments are ready. We look forward to welcoming you all to a pleasure-packed weekend full of musical satisfaction. Please see the related articles in this issue of *THEATRE ORGAN*. The *Going for the Gold* regional convention committee has made a concerted effort to ensure that all details are attended to so that your convention experience will be nothing but enjoyable.

While most are enjoying the lazy summer months between concert seasons, we are busier than ever. Babson College is installing a new floor, heating system, and generally upgrading Knight Auditorium where our beloved Wurlitzer resides. While the console is in storage we will design and fabricate a new mechanical lift. This means that future audiences will thrill as the console rises from floor to stage height. There is nothing like a "console riser" to provide an exciting start to a concert. We look forward to christening the new lift at the convention concert and banquet on Saturday, November 4, 2006. This concert will feature the inimitable Jim Riggs at the EMCATOS 4/18 Wurlitzer.

— Bob Evans
508-674-0276, bob@organloft.org



Garden State: Norm Andre, Carol Rustako, Bob Martin, Cathy Martin, Tony Rustako, Rowe Beale, and George Andersen at the Tampa Theatre

GARDEN STATE

Trenton, New Jersey—Our chapter news this month begins with an expression of gratitude to Jinny Vanore. Her contributions to this important department of THEATRE ORGAN have been faithfully submitted year after year. After 24 years as the GSTOS correspondent, Jinny has passed the torch on to me. I am confident that I speak for all in the chapter in thanking Jinny for her devotion to our Chapter and to this task. Great job, Jinny. Thank you.

May and June are as busy in the Garden State as any other season. In addition to chapter business meetings, we had open console at Cathy Oliver's home at the New Jersey shore. Cathy let members enjoy playing and listening to her 2/11 Wurlitzer and a full house took advantage of her generosity.

Two days later several members traveled south for the annual ATOS Convention in Florida. Being with so many other organ enthusiasts is always a great opportunity for networking and a source of many new ideas.

We are eagerly awaiting the next concert at the Trenton War Memorial when Bob Ralston will be performing on October 22. If you are in the area, come and join us. The beautifully restored Patriots Theatre is an excellent venue for enjoying theatre pipe organ music.

— *Catherine Martin, Ph.D.*

Don Hansen, President
732-350-0485, nesnah38@aol.com

LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles, California—March, April and May were quiet months for LATOS activities, but with concerts at San Sylmar as well as Orange County Theatre Organ Society events at Plummer Auditorium, our members could find theatre organ music. A few LATOS members made the trek up to the wine country to attend the annual Morton Madness event co-sponsored by NorCal and Sierra chapters. Jim Riggs had made many comments about how he was inspired to learn and play much of his repertoire on the Morton in the big blue barn at the Hartzells' Harmony Wynelands near Lodi. This was followed by a sumptuous buffet dinner and a terrific concert by Jim at the Kautz Winery. Although the two Mortons have nearly identical specifications, they are very different in sound, with the Kautz Winery Morton being louder and brighter. But both are very fine instruments.

A number of LATOS members were in Tampa, Florida at the end of May for the annual convention. This attendee felt that all the artists were in fine form. The bussing went well even though several bus drivers got creative with the route from Tampa to Boca Raton for the afterglow, but we all got there. The weather was typically hot and humid. It was great to see many old friends and acquaintances. I'll leave further commentary to the convention reviewer.

On Saturday, June 3, 60 LATOS members and friends took the "twenty-six miles across the sea" trip to Santa Catalina Island for the Catalina Island Museum's 19th annual silent film festival at the Avalon Theatre in the world-famous Casino. Chris Elliott, official film festival organist, accompanied *Show People* starring Marion Davies and William Haines, and directed by King Vidor. Chris did a great job despite some much needed work on the Page organ. Half of the swell shades on the Solo chamber do not close. LATOS has been arranging these trips every other year or so. The package includes round trip boat ticket, brunch at a popular Avalon restaurant, and the film ticket.

The Rosen family, Ken, Jenice and Charlie, hosted another summer picnic at their Chatsworth home on Sunday, July 2. This has become almost an annual affair. The food was great but of course the main attraction was the 2/11 Wurlitzer installed in an air-conditioned studio at the back of the property. The organ is the former 2/7 from the Pig and Whistle restaurant on Hollywood Boulevard. We were delighted to have Jerry Nagano as a surprise guest. He was passing through town on his way back to San Jose from San Diego where he had been preparing for a program to be played on the San Diego chapter organ in Trinity Church. Both Ken and Jerry played several numbers, and after lots of coaxing, several others were finally brave enough to take their turn at open console.

Chapter News



New York: Martin Boehling at the New York Military Academy 4/33 Möller in Cornwall-on-Hudson, New York (Photo by Tom Stehle)

The rest of the year will be busy with John Ledwon at San Gabriel Civic Auditorium at the end of July, and Ken Rosen will play for a silent film at Pasadena City College in August. October 1 is the date of the LATOS Annual Oktoberfest event held at San Gabriel Civic Auditorium and Patio. A catered lunch will be followed by a concert featuring Ty Woodward at the Wurlitzer. The South Pasadena High School crew will be putting the finishing touches on the Peter Crotty organ, and we look forward to an official dedication, hopefully sometime in the fall. And last but not least, planning is well under way for another Los Angeles Wurlitzer Weekend to be held over the Martin Luther King holiday weekend in January 2007.

— Wayne Flottman

Dorsey Caldwell, President
626-798-1820, dorsey.jr7765@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK

New York, New York—The New York Chapter presented organist Martin Boehling in concert at New York Military Academy in Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY, on Saturday, May 20. Martin's creative and delightful program on the Academy's 4/33 Mighty Möller served as both our chapter event for May as well as a part of the NYMA annual Alumni Weekend activities. Having both a classical and theatre organ background, Martin was able to present a varied program that showed off the great versatility of the instrument as well as his own talent at the organ. His program spanned the musical gamut from orchestral classics by Shubert and Strauss to more typical theatre organ fare that included beautifully arranged popular selections by Berlin, Gershwin and other contributors to the great American song book. Martin closed the program appropriately with a patriotic flare, playing all of the United States military marches. His encore, a piece by Richard Purvis, further demonstrated the artist's vast musical knowledge and the resources of this unique instrument. Thanks to Tom Stehle and Bob Welch, the organ was in fine tune and concert-ready, and thanks also to Lowell Sanders and Calvin Fenton for their production assistance with this program.

Two of our chapter project Wurlitzer installations on Long Island that unfortunately had come to a halt, due to problems at the venues in which they were being installed, have received a new lease on life. Work on the 2/8 Wurlitzer that was being installed in the Nassau County-owned Hempstead House, the former Gould mansion in Sands Point, had to be discontinued over a year ago due to several

problems involving the parks department that operates the mansion. Recently, we were informed that we could resume work on the organ and that the county is now eager to have it playing in the mansion. Chapter member Mike O'Brien will serve as crew chief as that project proceeds. Our 2/10 Wurlitzer, donated by the family of the late George Pasquaye, was to have been installed in the Patchogue Theatre in Suffolk County, but a change in management at the theatre resulted in the theatre's changing its policy regarding the organ installation. Recently, a nearby school district expressed interest in having the Wurlitzer installed in its high school auditorium. Mike O'Brien, who is also crew chief for that project, is now working with school district officials to study the feasibility of installing the organ in the school. Hopefully, these two Mighty Wurlitzers will soon find secure, happy homes on Long Island.

— Tom Stehle

David Kopp, Chairman
201-818-9950

daveakopp@dydacomp.com



Northern California: The Wurlitzer console at the Berkeley Community Theatre, set for the Tom Hazleton memorial celebration

NORTH TEXAS

Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas—Several North Texas chapter members drove to Wichita, Kansas for the final pair of concerts of the Wichita Pops Season, May 6–7. The Saturday evening performance at the Century II Convention Center featured Brett Valliant at the former New York Paramount Wurlitzer along with a wonderful vocal couple, Carrie and Patrick Greene. Brett was in fine form and aptly demonstrated his home-base familiarity with the Dowager Empress.

The Sunday concert at the 4/19 Little River Studio Wurlitzer was a special treat for the NTC members, as our own Danny Ray was the featured artist. Danny was pinch-hitting for an artist who was unable to make the date, and only had a mere 17 days to prepare his program. Danny chose his selections to introduce himself to a new audience and make sure that all knew he was a proud son of Texas.

Danny moved to the grand piano and Patti Simon took the bench of the organ to perform Danny's original composition, "The Little River Rag," dedicated to Wichita Theatre Organ President, Mike Coup.

The first part of June was busy in the extreme as the NTC prepared for the premier concerts of the 3/17 Wurlitzer in the McKinney Performing Arts Center (MPAC) in McKinney, Texas. Rob Richards did the honors at the console along with Ralph Wolf at the grand piano. As anyone who has seen the "Rob and Ralph Show" will agree, the duo is an entertainment powerhouse. Ralph's charm and wit is only exceeded by his musical abilities.

Rob and Ron Mitchell from Phoenix, Arizona, the "Tibia Doctor," arrived early to perform some chamber-side magic on the Tibia Clausa, Vox Humana and Saxophone ranks. And magic they did. Rob proclaimed the finished Tibia to be among the best he has heard. Those in the know agreed wholeheartedly after hearing Rob's performances. It was a combination of talent in the chamber and a great set of ears at the console for the tonal finishing.

Rob Richards is a consummate professional. The MPAC Wurlitzer is "fresh out of the box," and the programming by the manufacturer of the solid state control system on the organ was not completed in time for the concerts. The system was, to put it mildly, acting up. Rob worked around the problems like a champ. A lesser professional facing with such difficulties, might not have not played the show. The new audience in McKinney was thrilled with the organ and the music. The NTC owes Rob a debt of gratitude that can never be adequately repaid.

The NTC-MPAC Wurlitzer is going to be kept busy. The "Silents on the Square" series will open July 29 with Clark Wilson accompanying *Wings*. On August 18-19, Ken Double will put a score to Buster Keaton's *The General*. October 27-28 will feature *The Phantom of the Opera* with Rick Mathews providing the accompaniment.

Tickets to the "Silents on the Square" presentations may be obtained by calling the MPAC box office at 972-547-2650, Monday through Friday, 9–6 central time.

—Don Peterson
Richard Stewart, President
214-575-7499, Conn652jr@aol.com

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Berkeley, California—On Sunday, July 9, 2006, NorCal held a fond remembrance and celebration of the life of our friend, the late G. Thomas Hazleton. Using the computerized organ control system, some of his memorable concert performances at the Berkeley Community Theatre were heard. The event was informal and the audience respectful.

Both consoles were brought onstage so that both earlier and later computer-captured selections could be presented as originally performed. NorCal Program Chairman Gordon Pratt made announcements and provided some personal insights into Tom's life and career.

To hear a Hazleton concert anywhere was always a joy, and especially so on NorCal's big 4/37 Wurlitzer. It was a unique privilege to be able to hear the wide range of Tom's repertoire, drawn from four different concerts which had taken place here.

Coming up:
Hazleton Memorial Concert
Sunday, September 17, 2006, 2:30pm
Jackson Borges, organist
Presbyterian Church of Los Gatos
16575 Shannon Road
Los Gatos, California
408-356-6156, www.pclg.org

—Don Ravey
Editor, NorCal Windsheet
Kevin King, Chairman
510-644-2707, kevking@juno.com

Chapter News



Puget Sound: Andy Crow at the Puget Sound chapter organ. Mark Anderson at the Becvar 3/19 Wurlitzer. (Photos by Jo Ann Evans)

Sooner State: Dick Deaver and Phil Judkins (Photo by Bill Rowland)

PIKES PEAK

Colorado Springs, Colorado—Our weekly Thursday noontime Sacklunch Serenade has started. These programs are anchored by resident organists Tom O'Boyle and Bob Lillie. In addition to Tom and Bob, we have had some wonderful programs provided by visiting artists. In June, Ron Rhode from Arizona presented a program at City Auditorium as well as a great concert at Joel's Organ Barn near Kiowa, Colorado. Approximately 85 people were in attendance for the Organ Barn program. This last venue is a privately-owned installation in a custom-designed facility.

The following week, Stephen Brittain from Ft. Myers, Florida presented a program for Sacklunch Serenade, and again on Sunday afternoon, at Mt. Saint Francis for club members. During our Sacklunch Serenade programs we have also had additional attractions such as a model railroad display and an antique car exhibit, courtesy of local car clubs. Our attendance is consistently 250 to 325 people.

The final big event of the summer is the "Weekend with Jelani Eddington" set for July 20–22. In addition to the Sacklunch Serenade, Jelani will be conducting a seminar on registration and phrasing at Mt. Saint Francis. This will again be followed by a concert at Joel's Organ Barn.

The summer has been exciting musically, and we are only halfway through the season.

— John Hembrey
Owanah Wick, President
719-488-9469, dowick@prodigy.net

PUGET SOUND

Seattle, Washington—Fourteen enthusiastic members gathered for Puget Sound chapter's "Organ Maintenance Boot Camp" to learn about rebuilding, restoring, and maintaining theatre pipe organs. Organized by Mark Baratta, the all-day event covered operation and maintenance of wind chests, a tour of the chapter organ chambers, an explanation of the workings of the combination action, and a hands-on re-leathering session. All the participants are eager to join in upcoming maintenance projects.

A first for PSTOS, a pipe-organ-with-big-band event was presented to a combined group of PSTOS and Haller Lake Community Club members. Andy Crow put the chapter Wurlitzer through its paces, playing with Henry Reed's Good Times Band. The appreciative audience enjoyed many of the great tunes from the Big Band era, and all agree they'd like to see a follow-up event.

Home parties always enjoy a large turnout, and the summer event hosted by Jack and Mary Lou Becvar was no exception. Mark Andersen, recently relocating to the Northwest, played an outstanding program on the Becvars' 3/19 Wurlitzer. Mark adopts styles and arrangements of both George Wright and Jesse Crawford. The organ sounded great, the ambience was unbeatable, and the outdoor picnic that followed topped off the day with plenty of opportunities to catch up with friends.

In addition to the Wurlitzer, Jack collects clocks. And a trip to the lower level suggests he also collects electronic organs.

Visit www.pstos.org to view nearly 700 pages of Northwest theatre organ history.

— Jo Ann Evans
Tom Blackwell, President
206-784-9203, tom@pstos.org

SIERRA

Sacramento, California—Bob Salisbury from Southern California returned in May to accompany the silent film, *The Black Pirate*, starring Douglas Fairbanks, Sr. This was the fifth time that Bob has accompanied a film for our chapter at the Towe Auto Museum on the Dale Mendenhall Memorial 3/16 Wurlitzer. Bob turned us all on our ears with his dynamic scoring. There were 22 young people from the youth group at St. Stephen the First Martyr Catholic Church in the audience. Bob's performance was a great introduction to silent film with theatre pipe organ accompaniment, and he received a well-deserved ovation. We look forward to seeing you and Mary again next year, Bob.

Almost immediately after the performance, a dozen chapter members journeyed to Tampa for the 2006 ATOS annual convention. It was a great event and we all had a good time. The Central Florida and Manasota chapters are to be congratulated for their fine work.

In June, our members returned to the McCluers' home in the Sierra gold country for their 2006 picnic. We were joined by about ten members of the NorCal Theatre Organ Society. Both chapters provided a complement of professional and quality amateur organists for our entertainment. A total of 58 people were seated in our music building on a pleasantly cool afternoon. This year, 17 of the planned 19 ranks were playing. Good times and good music were enjoyed by all.

Many thanks to Dave Moreno for having the Towe and McCluer Wurlitzers in tip-top, cipher-free condition.

— Pete McCluer
Craig Peterson, President
916-682-9699, craigapeterson@cs.com



Sooner State: Bill Rowland and Phil Judkins (Photo by Carolyn Craft)



Valley of the Sun: Lew Williams at the Orpheum theatre. Ron Rhode's Wurlitzer Farewell. (Photos by Madeline LiVolsi)



SOONER STATE

Tulsa, Oklahoma—Sooner State Chapter's May meeting was another great one, again at Tulsa Technology Center's Broken Arrow campus. We heard music on our 3/12 Robert-Morton theatre pipe organ, played by two of our members, Dick Deaver and Phil Judkins. We opened with our customary singing of the National Anthem, with our president Bill Rowland playing the accompaniment, and then Bill introduced Dick Deaver.

Dick played all kinds of popular music, telling us as part of his introduction the year each piece was written. After intermission, it was Phil Judkins' turn. His music included a brisk Sousa march. We had time for open console, so we heard music from Bill Rowland, Carolyn Craft, and Betty Sprull.

There were about 80 people in the audience, including about 16 guests.

Our June meeting at the same venue began with Carolyn Craft accompanying our National Anthem. Phil Judkins then played for a silent cartoon, *Out of the Inkwell*, a combination of animation and live actors, which Phil's music matched perfectly.

The second film, *Steamboat Bill, Jr.*, was accompanied by our president, Bill Rowland, who told us some of the history of the film. Bill's wonderful music included many of his own improvisations, as well as recognizable tunes, all of which blended expertly with the screen action.

The evening closed with open console time, after which Phil Judkins, Dan Kimes, and Sam Collier disassembled the Violin/Celeste pipe chest. Sam took it to his shop for re-leathering.

— Dorothy Smith
Bill Rowland, President
918-355-1562

VALLEY OF THE SUN

Phoenix, Arizona—Ron Rhode and Ron Tanner invited our chapter members to their home on June 4th to bid farewell to their 3/23 Wurlitzer. The two Rons are moving to a historic 1930s house in central Phoenix, and the organ has been sold. We enjoyed a lovely afternoon of food and music. Rhode played a few numbers on the organ, and invited others to participate in open console. He also sat at the piano to accompany a talented eighteen-year-old soloist. We were very impressed with the young man's singing.

Our June 11th chapter meeting was held at the Orpheum Theatre. The program for the afternoon featured Lew Williams at the 3/30 Wurlitzer. Recently returned from the annual ATOS convention in Tampa, Lew played some of his "naturally moist" music. He also accompanied long-time friend Eric Zeliff on two vocal selections. Much of the program consisted of tunes that Lew knew were his audience's favorites.

Work continues on the Phoenix College organ, though some of it is being done in members' homes because there is no air conditioning in the auditorium on weekends during the summer.

We have our Silent Sundays film series planned for the 2006-2007 season, and also a major concert. Please check our web site, www.theatreorgans.com/az/phoenix, for our current events and our on-line newsletter.

— Madeline LiVolsi
Bill Carr, President
623-694-1746
billcarr3.vots.atos@cox.net

Editor's Note: The deadline for receipt of Chapter News submissions is the first of the month 60 days prior to the THEATRE ORGAN issue date. Electronic submission of text and up to two photos, 300 dpi resolution minimum, is encouraged. The captions and credits for your photos must be provided. Please include the name, telephone number, and e-mail address of your chapter president, the name of your chapter's principal city of operation, and the name of the chapter correspondent. ATOS policy prohibits the inclusion of the titles of music played at chapter programs, as well as menu items served at chapter functions. Jeff Weiler, THEATRE ORGAN Editor, 1845 South Michigan Avenue #1905, Chicago, IL 60616, weiler@atos.org.

Theatre Organ

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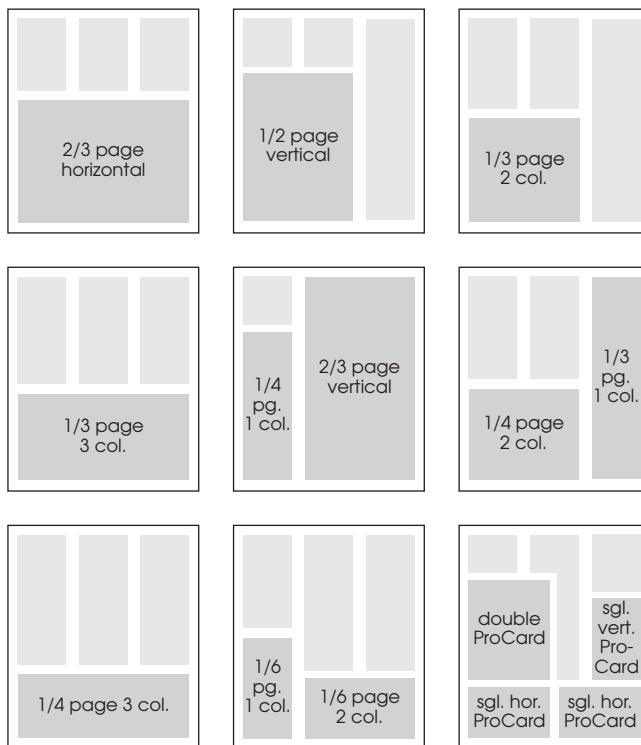
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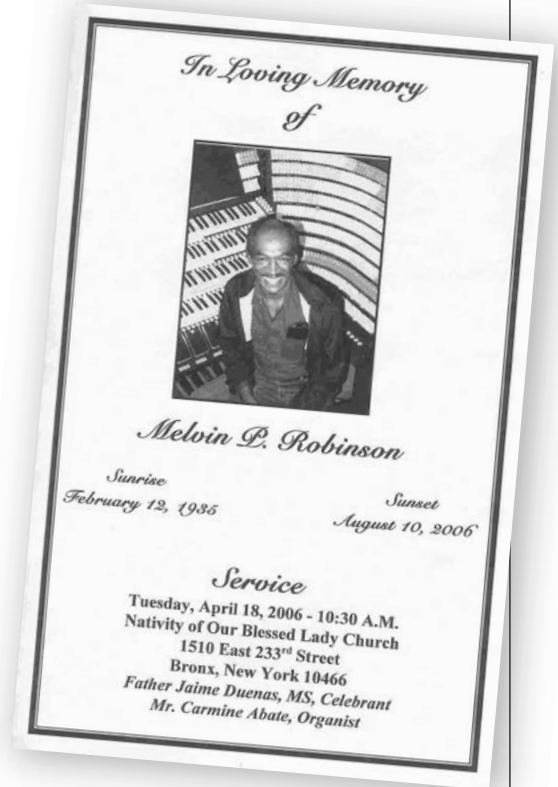
CONTACT & SUBMISSIONS—For ad placement, questions or submissions, contact Jeff Weiler, Editor, at weiler@atos.org; or Jeff's Administrative Assistant, Joanne, at 773-878-7817 or joanne@atos.org.

Obituary

Melvin P. Robinson

Melvin P. (Mel) Robinson, retired, passed away on April 10, 2006, in Mount Vernon hospital, Mount Vernon, New York. He was 71, born in Atlantic City, New Jersey February 12, 1935, to the late Warren Frederick Robinson and the late Marcella Derry Robinson. He received his formal education in Atlantic City parochial schools and Villanova University. Mel developed a keen interest in pipe organs during his early teen years. In his early adulthood he served as an apprentice in New York City with distinguished organbuilders, eventually establishing his own business as organ curator for St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York City, Trinity Church Wall Street, Metropolitan Opera at Lincoln Center, and rebuilding and maintaining pipe organs in many New York City-area churches. Mel traveled throughout Europe visiting contemporary and historic pipe organs.

He was an ardent member of the American Institute of Organbuilders as well as the American Theatre Organ Society. For over 30 years, he assisted with many theatre organ projects in the New York and New Jersey area. Some of his last work was done to the Robert-Morton organ in the Palace Theatre, Lake Placid, New York. Mel was a member of the American Guild of Organists and the Organ Historical Society. He is survived by his son Michael Ribando, daughter Tiffany and two grandchildren, all from Mount Vernon, New York; an older brother Donald P. Robinson of Rockford, Illinois; nieces, nephews, cousins and many caring friends. Mel was buried at Oakland Cemetery on Ashburton Avenue, Yonkers, New York on Tuesday, April 18, 2006.



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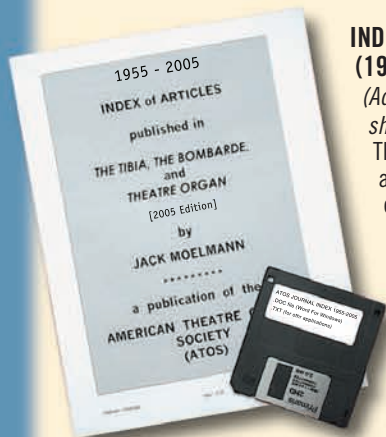
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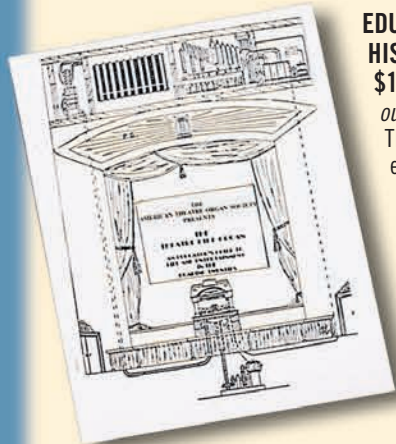
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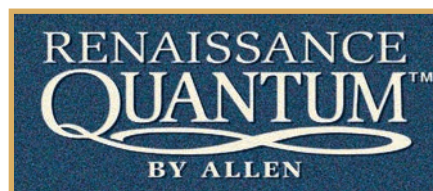
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