

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

# Theatre Organ

JULY | AUGUST 2015

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# Those Were The Days

## Pops Program

Colonel Jack Moelmann  
Walt Stony and Lew Williams  
at the Mighty Wurlitzer  
Theatre Pipe Organ

St. Louis Fabulous  
Fox Theatre  
Sunday,  
August 23,  
2:00 pm.

Tickets: \$25 general admission, \$35 for the  
mezzanine Tickets available through the  
Fox Box Office and MetroTix.



Colonel Jack Moelmann at the  
Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ

- Also Featuring Internationally Acclaimed Organists Walt Stony and Lew Williams
- Audience Sing-Along
- Short Laurel & Hardy Silent Movie
- A Musical "Tribute to America"

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THEATRE ORGAN JULY | AUGUST 2015 Volume 57 | Number 4



*The Redford console, showing side ornamentation (Photo by Lance Luce)*

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*On the cover:*

*The Redford Barton (Photo by Lance Luce)*

# Theatre Organ

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ATOS MISSION STATEMENT—To preserve, protect, promote, and present a truly American musical invention, the theatre pipe organ and its musical art form, worldwide;

To ensure that the few remaining instruments are played wherever possible to provide entertainment to the public as a solo instrument or part of an ensemble, and to accompany silent films;

To encourage industry-acceptance restoration, maintenance methods and techniques to ensure performance ability for future generations; and

To assist local chapters and our members by providing coordinated support in education, concert promotion and marketing to further our mission..

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# Vox Humana

## WE BLEW IT!

First, let me say “Yes indeed, we blew it.” Putting the May/June issue together and getting it out on time was so hectic, we completely overlooked our annual plea to those of you who will be attending the convention to think of us when you take pictures.

As you know, we rely on you to provide us with the wealth of pictures which really underscore the camaraderie and fun attendees have at the convention.

Of course, by the time you read this, chances are good that the convention will be over and you’ll be home recuperating from the activity-packed days. But while you’re unwinding, we’d sure appreciate it if you’d share some of your favorite pictures with us. We can’t promise we’ll print them all (we need to have a balance across all events) but we know there will be some gems in the mix.

If you’re just sending a couple of pictures (remember, we want the highest-resolution we can get) you can e-mail them

to us. If you have a lot to submit, drop us a note and we’ll give you an alternate method of getting them in.

Please don’t manipulate the images or otherwise “try to improve” them. It often renders an otherwise-great picture unusable.

And, of course, there’s the deadline... we need them in by July 25 at the latest.

You may have noticed that this issue is a little slimmer than usual. Remember that we’ve reduced the standard size of an issue from 76 pages to 68, including the covers. Based on our experience over the last few years, we anticipated that 68 pages wouldn’t be enough for the convention issue. We’ll add those eight pages back into September/October so we won’t have to cut our convention coverage short—we’ll be able to run more of the pictures we anticipate you’ll be sending in!

Business in the “real world” (i.e., not the Journal) has been quite busy the first half of 2015, and it has given us some

material for future articles. You can read about one project in this issue (a Kimball backrail). Given how much some aspects of this project made us think outside the box, we thought you might find it interesting.

We’ve had a couple of responses to the most recent Mystery Photo, but we’re going to let it run one more issue before we close it off. We know there has to be someone out there who can give us the definitive word on the identity of the organist.

Meanwhile, enjoy the convention; for those of you who couldn’t make it, next issue will contain Don Feely’s always-comprehensive narrative of the events and, with your help, a load of pictures!

Keep in touch.

—Mike Bryant  
—Don Feely



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Wurlitzer Manor, 4/48 Wurlitzer, Gig Harbor, WA  
Washington Center for Performing Arts, 3/22 Wurlitzer, Olympia, WA  
Aveni Residence, 4/60 Wurlitzer, Gates Mills, OH  
Peery’s Egyptian Theatre, 3/23 Wurlitzer, Ogden, UT  
Markworth Residence, 3/24 Kimball/Wurlitzer, Omaha, NE  
Brittain Residence, 3/25 Wurlitzer, Fort Myers, FL  
New Victoria Centre, 3/19 Wurlitzer, Howden-le-Wear, UK  
Johnson Residence, 3/23 Wurlitzer-Morton, Tacoma, WA  
East Sussex National Golf Club, Hotel, & Spa, 4/32 Wurlitzer, Uckfield, UK  
Singing Hills Golf Club, 3/23 Wurlitzer-Compton, West Sussex, UK

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# ATOS 2015 Summer Youth Adventure



## Midsummer in the Mid West

**Sunday, July 19 – Friday, July 24  
Omaha, Nebraska**

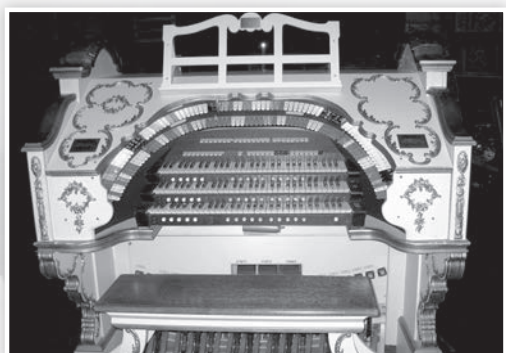
### **The Instructors**

Jonas Nordwall, Jelani Eddington, Donna Parker  
Martin Ellis, Christian Elliott plus special guest Tom Helms.

### **The Organs**

Robert Markworth residence 3/24 Kimball  
The Rose Theater 3/24 Wurlitzer  
Omaha Orpheum Theater 3/13 Wurlitzer

The SYA teaching team will guide participants through a diverse range of topics. The event will feature discussions, private coaching, master classes, and plenty of “hands-on” time at each of the instruments.



### **Registration**

Register online at the ATOS website. \$295.00 per student (including all tuition, meals, and transportation to and from the venues during the event). Scholarship assistance is available upon request.

Official Hotel — The Marriott Courtyard at Askarben Village, 1717 South 67th Street, Omaha NE 68106, 402 952-4300. Special ATOS rate of \$99 plus tax per day. Reservations must be made by June 1, 2015.

Chapter Hosts — The River City Chapter

# President's Message

## WHILE WE CONVENE IN PHILADELPHIA, THE WORK CONTINUES

As you read this message, the world of the theatre organ is enjoying its annual convention pilgrimage, this time to Philadelphia and points beyond. We will be enjoying ourselves, working hard, and you will be able to read all about it in the next issue coming out in early September.

This time of the year signals a time of change. We thank Jelani Eddington and Dan Minervini for outstanding service to ATOS. And for outgoing chairman Bob Dilworth, we extend sincere thanks for his efforts and leadership during a time of massive change for ATOS as the Retreat Forward program continues.

Jack Moelmann's term as a director also comes to a close. Jack wears his ATOS heart on his sleeve, and we not only thank him for his service, but wish him the standard "break a leg" in his big concert August 23 at the St. Louis Fox.

Meanwhile, we welcome Dave Kelzenberg, David Barnett, and Juan Cardona, Jr. to the ATOS Board of Directors, these three having been elected to serve. We also greet a new Youth Representative to the board, Josh Dill, from Albany, Georgia.

Finally, treasurer Mike Hutcherson is leaving his position after more than five years of service to ATOS. With fundraising successfully generating more than \$2 million over the past six years, ATOS was in need of a level of expertise in the treasurer's post that was not particularly necessary in years past. "Hutch" has worked diligently to update and upgrade practices, financial operations, investment and budgetary procedures to help ATOS better manage its resources.

Our sincerest thanks to Mike for endless hours of work on our behalf. We are pleased to tell you that Norma Smith will step in as ATOS Financial Administrator, handling the day-to-day administration of financial affairs. She has been assisting Mike for the past 18 months, and thus a smooth transition is

guaranteed with Norma already very familiar with the organization's financial structure.

The reports on ATOS programs and functions to be made at the convention will include the success of this convention event and the announcement that Western Reserve is well prepared for 2016 in Cleveland; Central Florida and the Tampa/Sarasota area will host in 2017; and we will head back to Los Angeles where Mark Herman will chair 2018. And Convention Planning Coordinator Mike Kinerk reports several interested chapters asking questions about 2019 and beyond.

The Summer Youth Adventure and the Technical Experience events are set for later this summer. Jonas Nordwall reports several brand-new attendees for this year's Summer Youth Adventure, a further indication that we are generating interest from new, young keyboard talent.

Carlton Smith is hosting the Technical Experience again in Indianapolis. This event assists chapter volunteers and also helps young technicians interested in the art of restoring these great musical wonders.

I spent the Memorial Day weekend with Bob Evans, Don Phipps and Bill Coale up in Massachusetts, completing an updated chapter survey. Results of this will be visible on the website as chapter contacts have been updated. We can report a total of 65 active current ATOS chapters, including the four beyond our borders: London South of England; Kiwi in New Zealand; Australia Felix; and Kingston in Ontario, Canada.

An extension of this effort is the announcement of a new method for ongoing chapter relations and communication. Shortly after the convention, ATOS will host its first "webinar." This will be an online video teleconference connecting chapter leaders from everywhere. We will share some major points of discussion, and then have the opportunity to

ask questions, share successes, seek assistance for troubled areas, and more. This is a major step forward in ATOS communication with the "front line of saving theatre organs," our local chapter leadership.

The committees working on the Retreat Forward plan continue to address Bylaws and Policies, finance and Communication. There will be much to announce after the convention, and much to continue working on. This is a time of change. We are wisely moving slowly and steadily (rather than stumbling quickly!) ahead in important areas, better defining Governance and Operations, better handling of finances, better communications with chapters and members, and securing a future for the organization and the instrument we love.

There's much more to come in my twice-monthly blogs and email messages, in these pages, and on the website. As always, thank you for your membership and support!

—Ken Double, President/CE



# Directors' Corner

## Meet Your New Directors



### DAVID BARNETT

Thank you for your trust in electing me as a director of the American Theatre Organ Society. It is an honor to be chosen and I pledge to do my best to serve you well during the next three years.

I am retired from a 50-year career in advertising, including print media, broadcasting, and audio-video production; in my spare time, I owned a small IT business, building and caring for small business computer networks. A member of ATOS for over 45 years, I have served as director, national secretary, convention planning coordinator and co-chair of the 1986 ATOS convention held in Richmond, Williamsburg, and Washington. I am a member of the Central Indiana, Dickinson and Old Dominion chapters of ATOS as well as the Organ Historical Society, for which I served as treasurer and controller for 29 years, and the Theatre Historical Society. I served as a vestryman and junior warden of historic St. James's Episcopal Church in Richmond and, upon retiring, joined the staff as facilities manager.

I first experienced a theatre pipe organ as a toddler when my parents took me to Loew's Theatre in my home town of Richmond, Virginia. There was an organ spot before the feature film and there I first experienced the 3/13 Wurlitzer theatre organ rising on its lift in a bright white spotlight and hearing its massive sound. My next experience occurred when I was eight years old and, as part of a birthday celebration for a friend, a group of us

boys was treated to a showing of *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* at the Byrd Theatre. Seeing that magnificent console rise from the orchestra pit for its pre-feature spot and hearing the mighty sound were unforgettable.

Not long after, my father and I were reading the local afternoon newspaper when we came across an article announcing that famous British organist Reginald Foort would be playing the Wurlitzer at the Mosque Auditorium in Richmond. Daddy was happy to take my best friend and me to that concert where we sat in awe on the front row, right behind the console; I was hooked on the wonderful sound. Several years later I learned of ATOS and became a member. I served on the organ crews at the Byrd Theatre and Mosque Auditorium and helped organize the first Virginia chapter. I have a Wurlitzer Style D with Hauptwerk VTPO system in my home.

As I write this, my term as a director has not yet begun and I do not know what my areas of responsibility will be. I believe in employing a strong full-time professional chief executive and believe we are fortunate to have President/CE Ken Double in that position. I support local chapter-building; aggressive membership development with outstanding member services; continued preservation, education and presentation efforts; young organist programs; and conservative, transparent financial management. I encourage members to contact me with their views and concerns in order that I may be an effective representative and steward of our organization and its resources.

—David Barnett



### JUAN CARDONA, JR.

As a first-time ATOS director, thank you for the honor and privilege to be able to serve. My first thoughts are to learn and understand how the board operates, understanding all the different functions, and seeing where my skills may complement the needs of the organization. I'm a computer professional in my business career and I enjoy learning and what happens on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis before suggesting changes or possible improvements. Finding what has and what hasn't worked and if it failed, why did it fail? What area has had the most success? I will certainly be asking lots of questions. Thank you in advance for helping get me up to speed.

When I was asked this past year to consider running for the ATOS board, I was told that my skills as a global business and information technology worker was a plus, and that the society would like to see younger members on the board. The third reason was just a bonus—that I enjoy the theatre pipe organ. The key to the conversation was ATOS is really looking for people who are very business-minded to run ATOS like a professional business. I think that was the selling point for me to agree to put my name in the hat and to run for the board of directors.

I've been a member of ATOS for 20+ years now and I have been in the information technology profession for the same period. When you combine the number of business colleagues with friends



and family you get to know over that time period, one has a large network of resources available to draw upon, where and when help is needed. For me, with the use of social media and professional networking websites, it allows me to stay in contact more frequently with these individuals. Within our ATOS group we have a lot of talent which also can be drawn upon to help continue the work of this great organization. We have technicians and performers of the highest caliber who can help promote the performance, installation and maintenance of these magnificent instruments.

There are many of us in ATOS, like me, whose regular jobs are in other career fields yet we love the theatre organ. They might work in sales and marketing, finance, education, engineering, information technology, or be successful entrepreneurs. We each have our own “circles of influence” and we should be including these people where ATOS has specific needs not already linked to the organization.

One area that I would be interested in learning more about is the relationships that the chapters have with the theatres and other public buildings that house these magnificent instruments. How often do the organs get used, other than for concerts or silent films? Are the members of the chapters actively involved with the theatres themselves? Do they support the other events that happen in these venues? Are there local theatre groups doing musicals or plays and do they want to use the organ before the shows? Do they want to use the organ as part of the show?

I am fortunate to have been the house organist for the opera house in Thomaston, Connecticut, for 23 now. I am a big supporter of the Thomaston Opera House and Landmark Community Theatre that manages the theatre. Our Connecticut Valley ATOS chapter-maintained theatre pipe organ is getting great use and is a key component of the brand and theatre experience to every show that occurs at the Opera House. Thousands of people are getting to hear the organ played and have grown to expect it on each visit.

The same is true at the Bardavon Opera House where I have been playing for 18 years. At Thomaston, not only does the organ entertain the audience as they

get seated and ready for the show, all the actors that are backstage getting ready for the show love it too. Nothing gets actors and the audience more pumped up than great live music. And, it is wonderful to hear, as an organist, that the actors love the playing as much as the audience.

At the Bardavon the organ is part of the regular classic film series. People arrive early to hear the organ BEFORE the films too. The Bardavon management is thrilled to see the audiences growing. This takes time but it illustrates that the more you work to show support of a theatre or venue and establish a good relationship, the more chances that you might have to present the theatre pipe organ as it was in its heyday.

In closing, I am excited and looking forward to serve on the ATOS board and with its other dedicated members. I truly hope that my business and performance knowledge, experience and network of resources can be successfully utilized to help the work of this great organization.

—Juan Cardona, Jr.



## DAVID C. KELZENBERG

It is a great pleasure to introduce myself to my new ATOS friends and colleagues! I feel very fortunate to already be acquainted with many of you after many years of organizing concerts and attending conventions, but for the benefit of those who do not yet know me, let me tell you a little bit about myself. Since I am very old, I have a lot of baggage to share!

I am a lifelong advocate of the theatre organ and its music. I started taking organ lessons at the age of eight, in the church that my family attended. I did learn about the possibility of playing popular music on

the organ, thanks to recordings, and I soon began to study with a teacher who taught theatre organ stylings as well as classical repertoire.

At age 16, my life was forever changed: I discovered the Mighty Wurlitzer organ installed in the Cedar Rapids Paramount theatre! As a teen I often played this instrument into the wee hours, long after the curtain fell on the final movie of the day. At the same time, I discovered and joined ATOS, and was a charter member of the Cedar Rapids Area Theatre Organ Society (CRATOS) when it was formed as an ATOS chapter in 1969. I well remember our first concert, which featured John Muri at the Paramount’s Mighty Wurlitzer, playing before a sellout crowd!

School took me away from Iowa as I continued to study “serious” music on organ, piano, and harpsichord in college and graduate school. But my love for the theatre organ never waned. Returning to the Cedar Rapids area, I rejoined CRATOS and became involved in many local projects, including the ongoing concert series that brought most of the professional theatre organists then on the circuit to town. In 1998 we hosted the first and only ATOS regional convention to be held in Cedar Rapids, and I was honored to serve as Master of Ceremonies for that event.

Some may know me as the owner of the Internet’s listserv (email mailing list) PIPORG-L, where I have facilitated thousands of conversations related to the organ over many years. When computers were far less sophisticated than they are today, I helped “newbies” by leading a series of workshops on computers at several annual ATOS conventions. I also served as chair of the ATOS Computer Networks Committee for several years, and co-created the Society’s first website. In addition to the piano and organ, I also play the harpsichord, the clavichord, and several other “ancestors” of the piano, and I am interested in mechanical musical instruments. I have written numerous articles that have been published in journals such as *THEATRE ORGAN*, *The Diapason*, and *The American Organist*. You may also have read my series of articles on the history of the theatre organ, published on the ATOS website.

# Directors' Corner

In addition to my new responsibilities to the American Theatre Organ Society, I also serve as vice president of CRATOS, and as president of Cedar Rapids Barton, Inc., the non-profit corporation that owns the famous 3/14 “Rhinstone” Barton organ installed (since 1928) in the former RKO Iowa Theatre. I also direct an early-music concert series and serve as secretary of the Historical Keyboard Society of North America, a multi-national organization devoted to the harpsichord, clavichord, fortepiano, and historic organ.

Today the American Theatre Organ Society faces many challenges. While we love our instrument and cannot understand why everyone doesn't, it is a sad reality that musical tastes have changed since 1920. The last big “hurrah” for popular organ music was the home organ craze, now some 40+ years in the past. The organ is no longer in the public eye, and the sound of the music that is currently popular is for the most part (in spite of some protests to the contrary) antithetical to the aesthetic of the organ. As a consequence our audience grows ever grayer and continues to dwindle. While we make efforts to freshen our image by teaming up with other musicians, trying to incorporate newer music and arrangements, and utilizing a variety of gimmicky marketing strategies, these efforts have met with only limited success in the larger public arena. We are at a crossroads: As the years pass, more and more public venues come under new management that is indifferent if not outright hostile toward their organs. At the same time, many organs under private ownership face uncertain futures as their owners age and pass on.

For the theatre organ to survive and thrive in the future, I believe we as caretakers must follow two seemingly opposing paths. First, we must look forward and build a foundation for the future by reaching out to those young people who would have a natural attraction to the theatre organ. Believe it or not, not all kids today are automatically attracted to hip-hop! There will always be some young people who are attracted to the theatre organ for its unique sound, its musical qualities, or its mechanical

complexities. Even we old-timers discovered and embraced the theatre organ at a time when the popular music of our culture involved guitars, drums, and shrieking singers—a far cry from Tibias and Voxes—yet we followed. The modern electronic/digital/virtual theatre organ in its various guises has been perfected to an astonishing degree, and it is the perfect medium for bringing the unique sound of our instrument to places where it cannot otherwise be experienced. But those who would be attracted to the mechanical complexity and engineering wizardry of the authentic instrument will not find inspiration in the realm of the digital organ, so we must also do what we can to retain, maintain, and USE pipe instruments already installed in public venues. (On the other hand, young people who are fascinated by computers and electronics might find the digital organ more interesting than its acoustic parent—a fact which should not be lost on those who dismiss anything that lacks pipes). We must do what we can to ensure that those who would be attracted to the theatre organ actually have a chance to experience it. If they don't, they'll never know what they are missing, and the theatre organ will have lost another opportunity.

Second, we must preserve our heritage and respect our past. Compared to pianos, violins, or saxophones, only a tiny number of theatre pipe organs remain, and most of these have been physically moved, broken and reassembled, re-specified, or otherwise modified over the years. No new ones are being made; our entire pool of instruments is what currently exists, and it is a shrinking pool. I understand that the aesthetic of the theatre organ has evolved over time, but I am not convinced that all changes have been for the better. In the race to electrify what had been pneumatic and to add more ranks, pistons, stopkeys, and memory levels, something has been lost. There has been an ongoing process of homogenization as the notion of an expected specification has developed, and organs have been modified in pursuit of that “ideal.” The result is organs that are difficult or impossible to distinguish from one another—an idea that, while

attractive to the itinerant organist, is foreign to the nature of the organ.

In earlier times it was much easier to tell a Wurlitzer from a Barton or a Kimball or a Robert-Morton, just by the sound. Indeed, it was frequently possible to distinguish different instruments by the same builder—there could be significant differences in their specifications and how they could be registered. Now, ranks have been swapped, consoles have been re-specified, and many Bartons, Kimballs, and Mortons have been “Wurlitzerized,” thus losing much of their unique charm and character. And, as people feel the need to build up larger and larger instruments, they forget that the vast majority of original theatre organs were two-manual instruments with fewer than eight ranks of pipes, and that only a tiny handful had over 25 ranks. Today, we have organs that are massively larger than the original builders ever could have envisioned (often assembled via the destruction of smaller instruments with historical pedigrees). Yet only a few precious organs remain in largely unaltered condition. Particularly where these instruments remain in the home of their original installation, I believe every effort should be made to preserve these unique organs as they were. Those that remain ably demonstrate that they are capable of producing beautiful music just as they are. When the last one is parted out, electrified, re-specified, or otherwise modified, we will have forever lost that direct contact with the history of our beloved instrument.

This, then, is our challenge, and I am excited by the prospect of devoting my energies to the cause of the great theatre organ. My first job as a member of this board is to represent you, and I appreciate the trust you have placed in me to do this job. To that end, I am eager to hear from you. I look forward to talking with you at upcoming conventions about your concerns and ideas, and I promise to respond promptly to your emails. How can the American Theatre Organ Society serve you? Please let me know. Thank you!

—David C. Kelzenberg, Iowa City, Iowa

# News & Notes

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

March 16 — May 15, 2015

Michael Bever, Connersville, Indiana  
John Bieber, Claymont, Delaware  
David Chivas, Venice, Florida  
Andrew Frey, Abbottstown, Pennsylvania  
Arlene Koefler, Wilmington, Delaware  
James Koressel, Montgomery, Indiana  
Kenneth Kramer, Cincinnati, Ohio  
Ann Mariposa, Oakland, California  
Phillip Maue, Shamokin, Pennsylvania  
Bernard McGorrey III, Southampton, Pennsylvania  
Paul Moore, Detroit, Michigan  
Ted Morter, Eckerman, Michigan  
Kent Nelson, Houston, Texas  
Jack Peters, Cherry Hill, New Jersey  
Mark Pope, San Francisco, California  
Ronald Rice, Venice, Florida  
Charles Roessler, Washington, District of Columbia  
Joshua Rutherford, Cedar Park, Texas  
David Schroth, Jr., Louisville, Kentucky  
Bill Shrive, Pinellas Park, Florida  
Gilbert Solorio, Sacramento, California  
Sally Sorber, Exton, Pennsylvania  
Glenn Thomas, Belle Mead, New Jersey  
Douglas and Evelyn Van Horn, La Vista, Nebraska  
William Weary, Newcastle, Maine  
Martin Wilk, Jr., Seaside Park, New Jersey  
Alan Wilson, Sutton in Ashfield, UK  
Homer Wolfe, Vienna, Virginia  
Susan Wylie, Woodville West, South Australia, Australia

## ATTENTION, INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS!

Do you live (and bank) outside the United States? If so, this is important news.

United States banks have begun changing the manner in which foreign checks are handled, including substantial increases in costs for processing those checks. In some cases, the new fees exceed the amount of the check!

ATOS simply cannot afford to absorb these increased fees and, rather than increase the surcharge for all international members, has made the decision to stop accepting checks or financial instruments drawn on banks outside the United States. This new policy went into effect on February 1, 2015.

If you already renew your membership online, this change will not affect you. If you are among the few international members who continue to renew with a check, money order, or other financial instrument not drawn on a U.S. bank, you will need to begin using the online membership system.

Renewing online is safe, secure, quick, and easy. Just visit [www.atos.org/membership](http://www.atos.org/membership) and use your Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express; in just a few minutes you'll be on your way.

If you have any questions please contact us. And, as always, we thank you for your membership and continued support of ATOS and the music of the theatre organ.

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# How Many Can You Name?

While we were rummaging through Bob MacNeur's collection of old theatre organ pictures some months back, we found a trove of pictures of organists from years past (some are WAY past, others not so much).

Back when these pictures were taken, many organists were true celebrities—their names were known to most of the general public. It wasn't uncommon to see the organist named on the theatre's marquee along with the name of the film's stars, and many lent their names and faces to advertisers (Jesse Crawford endorsed hats and cigars, among other things).

The organists pictured didn't reach the level of celebrity enjoyed by Crawford or Carter, but as the pictures suggest, they had fan bases which made it worthwhile to have professional pictures taken to fulfill the requests from fans for autographed pictures.

We didn't recognize most of them, and many were not identified on the pictures. Of those who were identified, we'll admit to being mostly unfamiliar with the names. So, we thought a pictorial feature would be a good way to get a little recognition for some of these lesser-known practitioners of the art of the theatre organ.

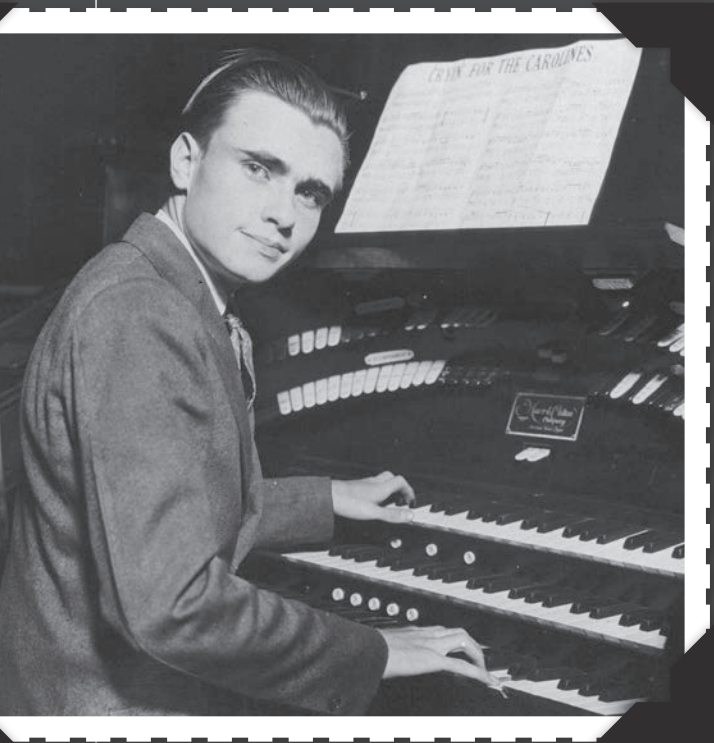
We'll see what we can do to recognize whoever is able to identify the most people pictured (we might even be able to come up with a token prize of some kind—we have lots of orphan Concert Flutes in the warehouse...).

Now, since there's an element of competition here, we felt we needed to make it a bit more challenging. There's one picture in the bunch which is not of a "real" organist. Identify which picture it is and tell us who is pictured on the bench, and you'll get extra credit!

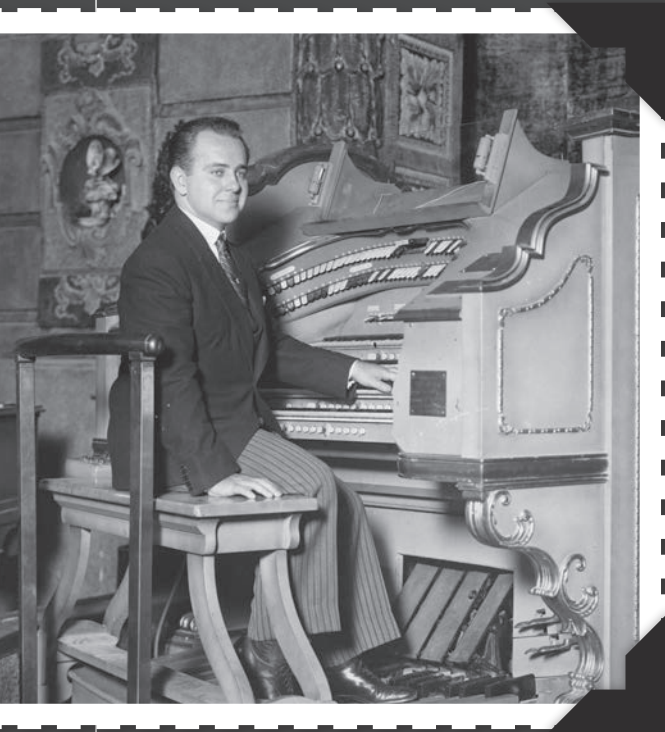


(All pictures from the MacNeur collection)















# GET OUT THOSE OLD RECORDS!

BY STEVE  
WORTHINGTON

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I have been asked a number of times what methods I use to clean up the older recordings we use on ATOS Theatre Organ Radio. The simple answer is that there is no simple answer, but I will attempt to discuss some of the methods here.



Generally speaking, the recordings fall into three categories: Vinyl, ¼" tape, or cassette tape. There are other formats that appear, notably 78-rpm discs and transcriptions; and sometimes the ¼" tapes will be recorded in different formats—two-track, four-track, etc. Most of what I discuss here applies generically, although occasionally other methods may need to be employed for specific mediums.

The mechanism by which these old recording mediums are transferred to digital format is fairly simple. You need a way to take the analog signal from the audio device (tape player, turntable, etc.) to a computer, and software to record the sound in a digital format. There are various methods to do this, but the two most popular are to use a sound card with analog or digital inputs, or USB input. Over time, the methods I have used have changed somewhat. Originally I used a high-end analog sound card in a desktop computer; these days I generally use a laptop and both the on-board sound card, and also a USB connection.

One point I will stress is that to obtain the best possible sound from any of these recordings, using the best “gear” possible provides the most optimal result. A lot of work is required to produce a good quality digital result, and starting with a poor quality signal will make the process nearly impossible. Don’t even think about using some neat-looking device from “Gadgets ’R Us” that you can buy for less than \$100 and expect that it will give anything like a decent



Reel Tape recorder



transfer. In fact, I personally would never put a vinyl record near a ceramic cartridge of the type used by several vendors.

I was once asked “how do you get those old records to ‘pop’ on the webcasts?” So, what gear do I use? The answer is that I use the best gear I can afford to do the transfers. The better the input, the better the output.

Most theatre organ records were recorded using the best available recording equipment at the time, and the recordings are of a high caliber. That sound the engineer captured can only be extracted using high-fidelity equipment. I use a 20-plus-year-old higher-end component cassette deck of the sort you can pick up at thrift stores for less than \$20 today, but in its time it was a high-end component. I have an even older TEAC reel-to-reel tape deck, which is a four-head machine that will play back in almost any format or at any recording speed.

When it comes to records, “the better the gear the better the result” paradigm is just as valid. I used to use my Regar Planar hi-fi belt-drive turntable, and connect it into the hi-fi system, along with the above tape components. Obviously a good high-fidelity pre-amp is needed to drive the analog sound into the computer, although generally I don’t fiddle with the tonal settings, and just take a straight “flat” feed.

I have changed the method I use for vinyl recently, mainly because it was a pain to move the turntable from my main hi-fi system and connect it to the computer via a phono pre-amp. So I purchased a direct drive turntable with a built-in USB pre-amp which plugs in to the laptop’s USB port. This turntable is a “mid-fi” component, primarily sold as a DJ turntable, but the output is excellent. However, the first thing I did was to replace the phono cartridge with a top-quality cartridge. Actually, the cartridge cost more than the \$300+ I paid for the turntable! This USB device makes the process of digitizing records much easier.

Let’s talk about tapes first, as that is the simplest thing to transfer to digital format. First, you should expect that a good 50% of the tapes you will find are unplayable, cassettes in particular. Unless they were recorded on very high quality tape, they tend to oxidize, eventually to the point where the dropouts make them unlistenable, or the mechanisms have reached the point of no return. If the mechanism is the issue and the tape just won’t play, it is often possible to rescue the actual tape by moving it to a different case.

Quarter-inch tapes also oxidize and drop out, but the more common fault is that they just break; the medium used for the tape under the oxide coating just disintegrates—particularly the older acetate-based tape (the later Mylar tapes just stretch...). There are mechanisms for “baking” tapes and playing them on special equipment to try to rescue the recording, but I don’t have those resources.

If we have a playable tape, it’s fairly easy to do that base digitizing by playing back the tape into the computer and using one of many software programs to capture a digital recording. Some examples are free products like Audacity, which does an excellent job and is available for download from the Internet.

Generally I would suggest you do the initial digitizing to a lossless format such as .wav, especially if you plan on doing further editing or cleanup. Then, after cleanup, drop the format down to the lossy formats most folks want for smartphones or other digital playback devices. (See the sidebar for an explanation of lossless versus lossy formats.)

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*From top: USB Turntable, Spin-Clean Record cleaner, CoolEdit Software*

Again, the better quality with which you start the cleanup process, the better quality the end result will be. Often with a tape recording there is considerable background noise or hiss, which can be removed fairly simply with an editing tool such as Audacity or one of the tools I discuss below, and the method for removing hiss is identical to the method described below for vinyl.

Let's discuss vinyl processing in more detail as this is generally more complex to complete, such that we get a clean noise-free result, allowing the clarity of the original recording to shine through.

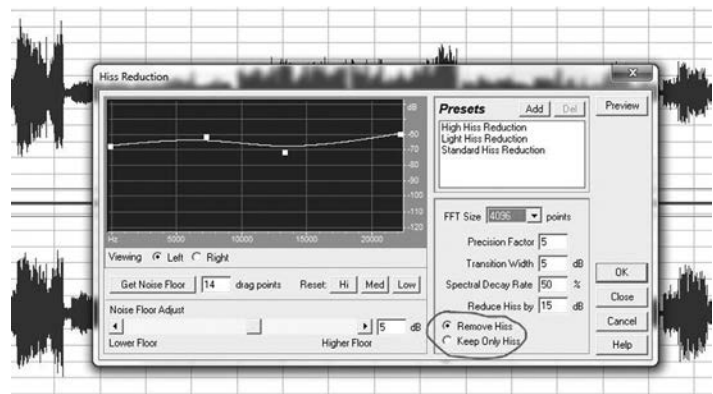
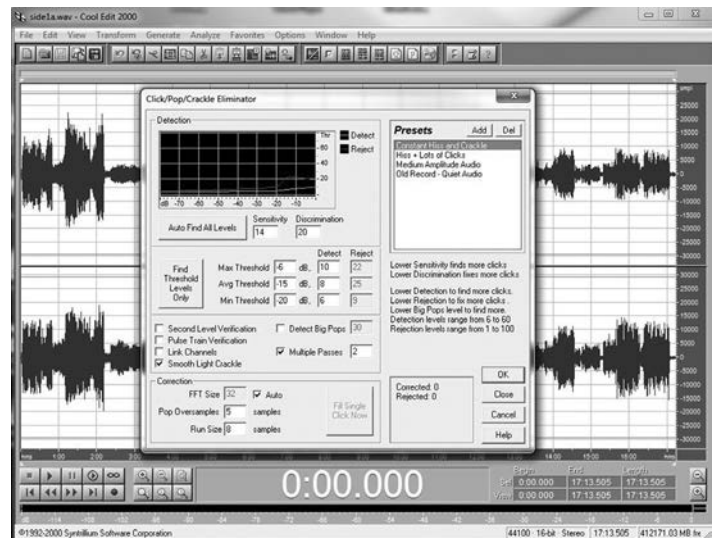
The first problem is that old vinyl can be a very different medium from label to label and pressing to pressing. Theatre organ LPs tend to fall into one of three distinct categories. The first is high-volume low-cost discs: these are the LPs issued on the budget labels, and are the many records labeled as Jesse Crawford (but not actually by him), the gazillion versions of the "Big Pipe Organ" from the Boston Met, and other records that you can find in lots of bins at thrift stores for \$1. The second group consists of the specialist limited edition releases by outfits like Concert Recordings, Organ of the Month Club, or by ATOS chapters, organ clubs, pizza parlors and the artists themselves. The third group includes the Audiophile records, the HiFi-label George Wright discs, and others specifically released to show off the recording engineers' skills, and to stretch the reproduction limits of the early hi-fi systems in the late '50s and early '60s.

Discs in the third group, the hi-fi discs, are the easiest to work with: they are good pressings, generally, with good attention to detail. The second set is hit-and-miss: Concert Recordings pressings were generally very good, as were most of the artist/specialist-produced recordings—labels like Malar and Doric! Most of the budget-label records are just a pain. Because the pressings were not high-quality and the vinyl used was poor quality, they tend to suffer a lot from surface noise, and the point below about being "worn out" applies more so because of the poor-quality product. There are exceptions to this rule, notably the Westminster or RCA LPs.

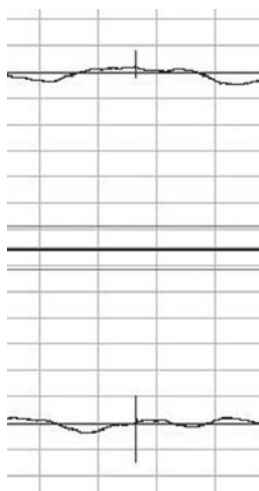
Another issue is: many of these LPs have been worn out by being played with poor quality equipment over the years. The first and third group are plentiful, and sometimes it takes a few copies to find one that was truly looked-after, and not wrecked. Occasionally a "virgin" vinyl version turns up, often on eBay, but that's when the credit card gets a workout. Because the second group were limited-edition releases and generally bought by enthusiasts, they tend to be in better condition, but harder to find a replacement if the copy you find is in bad shape. The one other point to be aware of is that many of the commercial releases were available in both mono and

stereo, so check to see which version you have—the stereo tend to sound better. There are odd occasions where you may come across a pressing that is stereo on one side and mono on the other!

So you have a record, and it appears to be in reasonable shape. What do you do next? Clean it! This can even apply to virgin sealed vinyl. How do I clean it? The simple answer is with water, but it gets more complex, as there are numerous commercial products available to use. I personally like the Discwasher products which just use a



Above: Fixing Crackle, Remove Hiss  
Below: Wave Form with Click, De-click, Wave Form after De-click

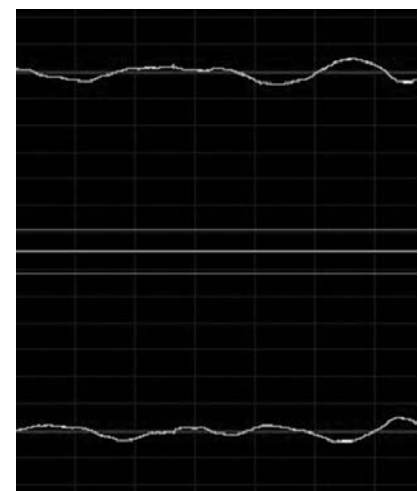


	Detect	Reject
Threshold	-6 dB, 10	22
Threshold	-15 dB, 8	25
Threshold	-20 dB, 6	9

Detect Big Pops 30  
 Multiple Passes 2

Auto  
 samples  
 samples

Corrected: 0  
 Rejected: 0



cloth and cleaning fluid. For really grimy records I also use a Spin-Clean, which is a pair of cleaning pads in a water bath with guides to “spin” the record through the cleaning pads.

Some people swear by the expensive vacuum products like the “Nitty Gritty” or “VPI.” One day I will spend the \$500 to \$1,000 and buy one, but I keep finding other things that eat up the money.

I don’t like the sticky rollers—I find they tend to leave a residue on the discs.

It usually takes more than one go-round to get the record clean. The more dirt you can get out, the better—you can scrub pretty hard and not damage the record. There are people who suggest a light sandpaper rub at that time too. I have yet to try that method!

One other option that does work, but takes some time and soon becomes costly, is to coat the record with white glue and just peel the glue off once it’s set! I have only resorted to this when a record is really dirty and normal washing and scrubbing doesn’t work. Note that in this case white glue is good, and hot glue is bad!

Hopefully the result is a record that will play with less noise and has no static, which causes lots of pops. You can also use anti-static cloths and guns to help if the record still has a static charge. The major issue when it comes to cleanup is not clicks and pops—they are generally easy to process—it’s surface noise, either because of a bad or poor-quality pressing or just old-fashioned dirt!

So we now play our record on the best turntable, equipped with the best cartridge we can find, through a top-quality pre-amp system and capture the sound with a computer in a digital format—and what do we have? A digital copy of our noisy record, with pops, clicks, surface noise, hiss, and crackle, and while we can now move this digital copy to our digital player, the listening result is not optimal, so the next stage is cleanup.

Cleanup involves software, and generally the software to do it properly involves spending money. While there are shareware products available for download from the Internet which will work—Audacity, for example—to do a good job you need to invest in a commercial product.

Many years ago I bought a product called Cool-Edit 2000, along with some add-ons to assist with vinyl cleanup. After some playing with the software options I determined the correct settings to get the desired result. Unfortunately Cool-Edit is no longer available. The company was sold to Adobe, who rebranded the product as Adobe Audition. It is expensive, and is focused more on the recording studio market, so is not as cost-effective a solution for cleaning old records.

The product I like best on the market today for the job is iZotope RX 4 Standard. There is also a professional version, but for just cleaning vinyl, Standard does an excellent job.

The screen-captures below are from Cool-Edit as that is what I use, but the process is similar for other products. I have some pre-sets that I have built especially for the characteristics of the theatre organ sound. Those pre-sets don’t work well with other music types, such as Jazz, Rock, or Classical, because each musical genre has its own footprint, and some trial and error is required to get the best results.

There are three things that need cleanup: hiss or noise (this also applies to tape), crackle, and clicks or pops. I’m going to give some general tips here, but trial and error with your selected software will be the only way to determine exactly what works. Your ears are the best tool you have, and a good set of headphones is a must! It’s amazing how lazy our hearing becomes, particularly when listening to loud speakers in an open room: we quickly adjust our listening to filter out what we don’t want to hear. With headphones, that tends to

happen less, as all we are hearing is the sound from the audio source and we become more focused on the result.

Let’s take each in turn. The first thing to attack is crackle, and most software has an automated mechanism to do this. Cool-Edit, for example, has a noise-reduction processor which, for the most part, will automatically sample the crackle and remove it. I just generally let it do its thing in the automatic mode, but when it fails there are a number of settings that can be adjusted and may help.

This process can involve multiple passes of the file, processing each channel separately, or linking the channels, so that an issue on one channel causes cleanup on both. You can also set thresholds manually for determining levels of cleanup. The trick is to remove the noise and leave the music. Ending up with something that sounds like it was recorded in a metal trashcan is very easy. Sometimes you just have to settle for less noise removal and more music.

Save constantly, as “undo” becomes a necessity when you try something and the result is worse! I often save multiple versions which have had different treatments, and sample them sequentially to decide which one I want to keep. Often it’s good to leave the versions, then come back and listen later, as ears become “tired” and a fresh listen will often help.

The next item to tackle are what I call “Big Pops.” These have a very distinct waveform so are easy to spot and usually easy to remove—usually a quick scan of the file with the “de-clicker” set is enough to remove 90% of the clicks. Some clicks, although they can be distinctly heard, are not as obvious, especially in passages where the traps and percussions are evident. The only way to remove these is manually: listen to the recording, and de-click each pop as you hear it. This can be tedious, and some can be very difficult to find. Again, it’s easy to remove too much audio around the click resulting in...yes, silence.

Hiss and noise are about the most difficult things to remove. There really are no easy ways to do this; you must attack it manually. My software has a neat feature that allows you to listen to the hiss as it is being removed. The great thing about that is that you can judge how much audio you are losing along with the hiss! By adjusting the sound floor it’s possible to maximize the amount of hiss being removed, and minimize the audio loss—just remember to switch back to hiss removal rather than hiss-listen before you actually run the process.

For the best results I always try to clean up track-by-track. Because of the nature of a vinyl disc (and the recording and engineering process), the characteristics of one track may differ from the next. I also always add a fade-in at the beginning and fade-out at the end of each track. The last thing you want is a pop as you start or end the playback.

This is a trial and error process, and sometimes it can take many attempts to get it right. I do occasionally find a record that I can’t help much. If it’s a recording of historical significance we may include it even if it’s not perfect. If it isn’t then I may just decide that I need to try to find another copy, and try again.

Sometimes it’s a fun process, especially when you take a less-than-stellar transfer and achieve a great result. Other times it can be very frustrating.

Good Luck!

# Cleaning Up the Terms...

Some of the terms used may not be instantly understood. So, here is a layman's explanation which should help.

## LOSSLESS and LOSSY

The easiest way to understand this is to think about images instead of audio. When you take a picture with your digital camera it collects all the data throughout the frame and saves it in one of several formats (you can choose them).

The RAW format contains all of the data your camera collected and produces the highest-quality image. But it also produces the largest file, so you can save fewer images on your memory card. Since it contains all the data, it is known as a "lossless" file type.

The audio equivalent of a RAW image file is the .wav file.

If you need to save more images on your memory card, you might choose to have your camera save them in JPEG format (abbreviated .jpg in the file list). To produce a smaller file, the compression algorithm evaluates and discards some of the data. This may show up as a loss of sharpness, or the dynamic range (between blackest black and whitest white) is narrower, or other artifacts may appear. JPEG, therefore, is a "lossy" file type.

.mp3 and .mp4 are examples of lossy audio file types—but just being lossy isn't always bad.

With audio or video, there is a tradeoff. You may not be able to see or hear the difference on your audio or video device. On your tablet or smartphone, played through a set of earbuds, an .mp3 file may sound great, and you might be able to have the entire recorded output of every theatre organist on your smartphone—and still have room for some Led Zeppelin!

But when you play that same file through a high-end home stereo system, you may notice the degradation caused by the lossy format.

And as we age, our hearing and vision become lossy as well.

The key is to always start with a lossless format, then move to lossy if it's appropriate for how the file will be used. If you start with a lossy format, remember that you can't replace that which was never there.

## CERAMIC CARTRIDGE

The cartridge is held in the tone arm, and contains the stylus which tracks in the groove of the record. It is the cartridge which, more than any other component of the turntable, determines how accurately the information cut into the groove is passed to the input of the audio system. This is called "compliance."

"Tracking force" is the amount of downward force holding the stylus in the groove. The most compliant cartridges will require lower tracking force to navigate the groove, and that translates into the longest life and least wear on the record.

There are two main types of cartridges: ceramic and magnetic. Magnetic cartridges are higher-compliance than ceramic, generally have far better frequency response, the lightest tracking forces, and produce more accurate reproduction across the entire audio spectrum.

Low-quality ceramic cartridges can often be so non-compliant that they will actually damage a record to the point where the damage can be heard after just a few plays. If you've ever seen a black vinyl record whose surface now looks gray here and there, that's often a visible manifestation of the damage caused by a low-grade tone arm and cartridge combination.

## PHONO PRE-AMP

Turntable cartridges work by using the motion of the stylus in the groove to generate an electrical signal. Ceramic cartridges have greater mass and are able to produce higher-voltage signals, sometimes as much as 0.5 volts. These cartridges can be plugged in to any "high-level" input on your audio system, just as a tape deck or CD player can be.

Magnetic cartridges, due in part to the much lower mass of the components, are only able to generate a very small signal (typically measured in millivolts). To use that signal, your audio system must have a low-level input (typically called a "phono" input), or an intermediate device—the phono pre-amp—must be used to boost the signal level so it can be used with a high-level input.

## USB

USB stands for Universal Serial Bus. It is a connection format and protocol which replaces several proprietary connectors with a single, universal connector to which peripheral devices—printers, keyboards, cameras, audio equipment, phone chargers, network adapters, etc.—can connect.



# The Redford Barton

BY JOHN LAUTER

(Photos by Lance Luce, except where noted)

## The organ that saved a theatre, and a neighborhood

The motion picture theatre business in Detroit was owned by one man in the teens and twenties: John Kunsky. From humble beginnings he built a chain of theatres in Detroit and the surrounding areas. Like every other exhibitor, he needed pipe organs. His early theatres in downtown Detroit featured somewhat liturgical instruments from Hillgreen-Lane. The Capitol Theater (1922—now the Detroit Opera House) opened with a 38-rank instrument from that Ohio builder. It was replaced three years later with the very first “production” Wurlitzer Publix 1 model. His flagship Michigan Theater (Kunsky held the Paramount/Publix franchise for Detroit and surrounding cities) featured the first 5-manual Wurlitzer produced.

Sometime in 1926 plans were made for three medium-sized theatres in outlying communities, after which they would be named. The Royal Oak Theatre and the Birmingham Theatre were designed by the famed Chicago firm of Rapp and Rapp, while the Redford project was trusted to the Detroit firm of Verner, Wilhelm, Molby, R.F. Shrieve and Associates. Where the Royal Oak and Birmingham reflected the Rapp brothers’ taste for French styles, the Redford was to be an atmospheric theatre with a Japanese courtyard theme.

These theatres needed organs, and this time Kunsky’s office turned to Barton. All three organs were to be equipped identically, in terms of rank count and percussions; only the console decoration treatment would vary to fit the interior of the theatres. All three organs were sold on the same contract, and were shipped from the Barton factory in Oshkosh, Wisconsin on the same train. The three organs have consecutive “organ” numbers—Barton’s numbering system, as

opposed to the “Opus” term associated with Wurlitzer. The Royal Oak was organ number 257, with a gold and red “Circus Wagon” decorative scheme. The Redford came next, organ number 258, with a dragon-adorned “Oriental” themed console, one of five made by Barton, and the only Oriental console where the theme carried over to the side panel décor in elaborate detail. The Birmingham Barton was organ number 259, finished as a “Candelabra” console in gold. Each console rode up and down on Barton’s own unique four-post elevators.

The specification of these organs was not unique, for Barton—10 ranks, consisting of:

### Main Chamber

- Flute 16'-2'
- Open Diapason 8'-4'
- Clarinet 8'
- Tuba Horn 8'
- Chrysolott - 37 notes

### Solo Chamber

- Tibia 16'-4'
- Vox Humana 8'-4'
- Viol d'Orchestre 8'-4'
- Viol Celeste 8'-4'
- Oboe Horn 8'
- Kinura 8'
- Xylophone - 37 notes
- Glockenspiel - 37 notes
- Chimes - 20 notes
- Traps and toy counter.

On the surface this is your basic 10-rank theatre organ, as imagined by Barton. This worked out in all three cases to be a fine sound for those theatres, and filled these buildings admirably. This model is a “deluxe” Barton, so called (latter day jargon, not official Bartola Musical Instrument Company terminology) to separate it from







# The organ today is what was installed by Barton in early 1928, with very few modifications.

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the “B-3” or “Butterfield Special” economy jobs, which have a mixture of unit and straight ranks, lower pressure (10”) Tibia rank and short compasses on many ranks and percussion instruments. The Redford Barton is fully unified (for 1928), the Tibia is at 15” pressure and all ranks and percussions have the expected compass for an instrument of that size.

The organ today is what was installed by Barton in early 1928, with very few modifications. It still runs on its original electro-pneumatic relay and console combination action. The DC-current generator was taken off the blower in the 1980s, replaced by a DC power supply. A piano was added in 1973—an upright player piano adapted into an organ-ready unit by Jim Boutell and Larry Perry. The piano cabinet was finished by member Ed Johnson to resemble the Barton console’s finish. This work came easily to Johnson—he was an experienced puppeteer who made and painted his own puppets.

That piano is pretty tired these days. It is a so-so brand of player piano that has endured 40-plus years of high-vacuum beating and is due to be replaced soon with a Grinnell Bros. player from the same era, but built like a locomotive compared to the current piano. A 16’ tuba extension was added in the late 1980s, after an extensive search to find a bona-fide metal 16’ Tuba that was from a Barton organ. This was purchased from Bob Maes and installed by Marty Martin and Tom Hurst.

A few other minor modifications were made: The first-touch Snare Drum tab on the pedal was replaced with a Great-to-Pedal coupler (in advance of a concert appearance by Virgil Fox—more on that later); a second-touch to first-touch switch for Pedal traps was added; and the author added a Xylophone reit/non-reit switch in the late ’70s. That’s it—everything else is the way Barton made and installed the organ.

Draperies lining the auditorium walls were added in 1964. This affected the

sound of the organ negatively, as one would assume. David Brewer regulated the treble pipes to try to fight their way out through the drapes. After some negotiation with Community Theatres (the Redford Theatre’s owners) a “swag-back” system was devised to open the drapes in front of the chambers. After MCTOS took over operation of the theatre in 1974 we removed the drapes. This improved the sound of the organ tremendously.

The Redford organ saw use like any other theatre organ, declining with the introduction of talkies. In 1931 John Kunsky’s theatrical empire collapsed, and the pieces were picked up by United Detroit Theatres, Wisper and Wetman and the Goldberg family, doing business as Community Theatres. At this time the Redford was purchased by the Goldberg family, and run as any other theatre. Little is known whether the Barton was used for community sings or interludes.

The organ survived, the decades rolled on and the console sat under thick black draperies. Some parties looked at the organ, with an eye to purchasing it. Well-known Detroit theatre-organ enthusiast Henry Przybylski began visiting the Redford in the early ’60s and, after earning the confidence of the theatre staff, began some work on the Barton, making it playable. Henry visited the theatre and gave the Barton an occasional workout during these years.

The Motor City chapter (MCTOS) formed in the fall of 1964, just blocks from the Redford in the home of Albert and Betty Mason. The newly-minted chapter approached Community Theatres about the possibility of restoring and using the Redford Barton. After receiving the go-ahead, efforts began to rehabilitate the Barton to fully functional status. A crew was formed with James (Jim) Brown as its leader, assisted by Shanley Russo, David Voydanoff and others.

Of first importance was curing the “Bartonitis,” the particular electrical fault unique to this brand—open circuits

due to the salad of metals Barton used in their spreader connections. A copper wire from one cable is wrapped around a brass pin, which is driven into a wooden backboard though a phosphor bronze strip, all soldered together, which is to carry electrical current to an identical setup at the other end of the strip. Over the decades these connections develop many “open” circuits, causing functions to stop working. Most all connections in the console were heated, the old solder removed and the host metals abraded, after which fresh solder was applied. This put the organ back into service. Two years later the chapter releathered the console combination action.

The Redford Barton has lived something of a charmed existence; its sister organ at the Royal Oak Theatre suffered terrible roof leaks (disadvantage: Rapp and Rapp) and was given up as unsalvageable by organ enthusiasts in the 1950s. It was restored in a herculean effort by MCTOS members after the Redford Barton restoration was completed. The Redford Barton was fortunate to live in a building with a (mostly) good roof, owned by caring people, the Goldbergs. They took good care of the Redford, and kept the organ chambers locked securely. Every pipe, every chest, every action in the Redford organ is original to the 1928 opening night. Since the Motor City chapter took responsibility for the Redford Barton the maintenance leaders have been Jim Brown, Larry Perry, Norwood (Marty) Martin and Tom Hurst.

Two incidents of water damage occurred at the Redford. The first, in 1973, damaged the chest for the Tuba rank. The leak was discovered within a short period after occurrence and the damage to the chest repaired. Maintenance chief Larry Perry was faced with splitting of the side boards of the chest, where the bored channels carry the air to the individual pipes. The splits allowed the air to leak to adjacent channels, causing crosstalk (two or more pipes speak although only one is played).



Solo Chamber L-R: Kinura, Viol, Viol Celeste, Oboe Horn.



Main chamber L-R: Flute, Diapason, Tuba Horn, Clarinet.

Larry had heard of a technique from Royal Oak crew chief Mert Harris using wood glue, poured into each pipe hole, while the holes were covered inside the chest below with masking tape. The author, being 14 and rail thin at the time, was elected to go on top of the chest, between the other standing ranks and pour the glue into a pipe boot “funnel” then blow into the end of the boot to make sure the glue made its way to the bottom. After the last hole was filled, the toe holes were covered with masking tape, to prevent the glue from drying at the top.

We returned a week later, draped heavy plastic between the sides of the chest in a downward slope at the bottom and pulled the tape off of both the top and insides of the chest. The excess glue (most of what we poured) slowly began running into the plastic sheeting, running downhill back into the jug from which it came. I was pressed into service again, using the same Tuba boot to blow out the excess glue from the channels and to make sure that the channels

were clear. This fixed the problem. The glue had seeped into the cracks, sealing them and making the channels discrete again.

The second incident occurred in 1977 in the Solo chamber, ruining much of the leather in the Oboe Horn chest. Members led by Marty Martin re-covered the secondary pneumatics for that rank and had it back playing in short order.

In more recent years the care of the organ has been entrusted to Tom Hurst, and it remains one of the most fully-operational, in-tune organs you would want to play.

Speaking of playing, the Redford Theatre opened January 27, 1928. Premier Detroit theatre organist F. Donald (Don) Miller was brought from the Kunsky State Theatre (now KA “Fillmore”) downtown to open the theatre that night. Little is known as to who the organist was at the Redford while the organ was in use. What is known is that since the MCTOS rescued the organ the list of organists who have appeared at the console reads like a roster

of the greats of the horseshoe console. Gaylord Carter re-premiered the Barton in 1967, accompanying *The Mark of Zorro*. MCTOS has featured Don Miller (a return engagement after 35 years!), John Muri, Lee Erwin (numerous times), Pearl White, Eddie Weaver, Lyn Larsen (several engagements), Hector Olivera, Dennis James, Rex Koury, Don Baker, Ashley Miller, Lowell Ayars, Tom Hazleton, Jonas Nordwall, Fr. Jim Miller, Tom Gnaster, Carol Jones, Walt Strony, Clark Wilson, John Steele, Jelani Eddington, Barry Baker, Lew Williams, Scott Foppiano, and, saving the best for last, Virgil Fox and George Wright.

Virgil Fox was presented in May of 1975 by member Jim Boutell as a private enterprise after the MCTOS board declined to engage the famed virtuoso artist. The theatre was jammed to the rafters and Fox played the Rodgers “Black Beauty” touring organ for most of the concert. He played a short set on the Barton after intermission, playing a perfect rendition of “I Love to

# The Tibia is especially lovely, and as with all theatre organs this rank determines the listener's perception of the whole organ.

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Hear You Singing" in full Jesse & Helen mode. George Wright made two concert appearances, one in 1982 and one in 1985. They were the result of the determination of Dorothy Van Steenkiste, who would go onto become an ATOS director. She campaigned to get Wright, and to pay his fee, which at that time was the highest in the field. It was worth every penny spent and more. The large crowd that he attracted heard the Barton as we had never heard it before—or since.

George liked what others like about the Redford organ, its versatility at 10 ranks for many different styles of music and the smooth ensemble, led by a beautiful Tibia. The organ is especially nice in the mezzo-forte range; everything churns and blends wonderfully in the room.

The sources of pipework on a Barton seemed to be a matter of chance, depending on which supplier could ship on time. In the case of organ #258 the Diapason, Viol and Celeste were made by Jerome Meyers, and possess the richness of tone Meyers is known for. The strings are broad in the 8' octave and get progressively brighter at the top. The Clarinet, Oboe Horn, Vox Humana and Kinura were supplied by Dennison, and are all uniformly good ranks. The Tuba horn is a Gottfried Cornopean, a departure from the Dennison Tuba Horn rank seen on most Bartons. The Gottfried Cornopean has a bit of a bright edge on it, and gives a little more "bite" than the Dennison Tuba Horn. It's regulated on the loud side, but being a Barton this helps its "bigness" of sound for the rank count. The Flute and Tibia ranks were most likely made by Barton: they both sourced wood pipes from supply houses and made their own, depending on how busy things were.

As I said earlier, the Tibia is especially lovely, and as with all theatre organs this rank determines the listener's perception of the whole organ. Dan Barton's Tibias do not disappoint. Some Bartons have the tremulant exhaust air from the regulator, resulting most often in a trem that goes null-flat (repeat as necessary). The Redford

was winded from the factory to exhaust air from the opposite end of the chest from the feed, like brand "W," giving the more musically desirable flat-sharp response our ears prefer.

The organ has ample room in the chambers, not shoehorned in like some, and the tone openings are large, allowing more than adequate egress of sound. Barton swell shutters are known for their effectiveness, and the walls must be made of solid concrete. With this design the whole organ, registered at full organ, can be held back by the shutters then let out all of a sudden for a great musical effect.

With the exception of the 16' Tuba extension MCTOS has resisted the all-too-common urge to expand the rank count over the decades of its stewardship. Realizing the small number of remaining original installations, we have preferred to keep the 10 ranks it has in perfect mechanical order, to keep the organ in tune and in good voice. One member who headed work at the Royal Oak theatre was convinced that the four-rank chest in the Solo chamber was installed backwards. It is—the tall pipes are well within the tone openings, and the high end of the chromatic chests are in the corner, out of the tone window. Your ear really does not pick this up, and all of the aforementioned artists have yet to comment. It doesn't have an English Horn (Post Horn), and does not have all of the Tibia mutations used so effectively by George Wright (although he didn't complain about this omission). The console has seven pistons on Accompaniment and Great manuals and five on the Solo, as was Barton's practice—no generals. All are set via the setter board in the back of the console, as it was in 1928.

This instrument, in this setting, has served as a springboard for young area talent. Having access to a real theatre pipe organ is important to a young musician trying to learn the theatre organ. MCTOS is proud to say that Lance Luce, Tony O'Brien, Rick Cucci, Peter Hansen, Melissa Ambrose-Eidson, Susan Lewandowski

(Muraszewski), Heather Novak, Emily Seward, Justin LaVoie and, most humbly, the author all have gone on to be featured console artists through their Redford experience.

After taking over operation of the Redford Theatre in 1974 MCTOS found itself in the theatre business, like it or not. The group floundered around with various attempts at making money in this business. Some short runs of classic movies, then we would have six months of just rentals and organ concerts. It became clear to some of us that the monthly financial burden of running the building would not be met this way.

We had located a set of Norelco AAI (also known as DP-70) motion picture projectors from the doomed Cass/Summit Theatre downtown. Through a series of ups and downs we finally ended up with these machines. We ended up completely renovating the projection booth (by this time we had begun to purchase the theatre) with the objective of launching a bi-weekly classic movie series to draw large numbers of people to the box office—to pay our bills, including our mortgage.

The Barton was, and is, a source of pre-show entertainment, played before each and every film showing at the Redford, and at intermission (every film gets an intermission, whether it needs one or not). This gives the Barton another chance to be featured, and sends customers to the concession stand for more refreshments—an important source of income for MCTOS. This film series is now in its 38th year, and the Redford and its Barton organ are inseparable in the minds of countless Detroit-area residents. Thousands upon thousands have heard this organ through this broadly popular form of entertainment.

Our previous article gave you some insight into the ups and downs of the city and the Redford. With large numbers at the box office again, the Redford Barton, one of the few remaining original installations, is poised to entertain patrons well into the future. By saving this original installation

# We saved an organ, we saved a theatre and we saved ourselves.

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we saved a theatre, the theatre kept the neighborhood from going completely downhill and we saved our group from extinction.

MCTOS at its peak had four organs under its care, the Redford, The Punch N' Judy Theatre 2/5 Wurlitzer, the Royal Oak 3/17 Barton (it grew, and not well) and the Ann Arbor Michigan Theater's 3/13 Barton. The Punch N' Judy theatre was gutted for an office building, and the organ donated to MCTOS, who sold it before it left the building. The Royal Oak Barton was evicted by the theatre's new owners—it "no longer fit into their plans" for a rock nightclub-type

operation. It was removed by MCTOS, put into storage in a trailer, and sold to a private individual after a couple of years. That owner needed his cash back out of it—fast—and the organ was sold to a broker, who "broke" it into parts and sold it off piecemeal. The Ann Arbor Michigan Theater is the happy end of this tale; the organ there saved that building, and the people from MCTOS who cared for the organ continue to do so today under the banner of the Michigan Theater Foundation. The organ is actively used in movie and silent film presentations.

Not a part of MCTOS, but germane to this story, the Birmingham Barton went to

a residence for a while, and then saw use in a local pizza parlor (I played it there). After the restaurant folded it ended up out West, and it was eventually broken up for parts. If we had not taken over the Redford Theatre, the chapter's reason for being would have disappeared. The Redford Barton would have been sold off, or parted out. It is the last of the original three "Kunsky Bartons" intact and playing.

We saved an organ, we saved a theatre and we saved ourselves.



*The Tibia rank.*

Redford Theatre  
 Detroit, Michigan  
 3/10 Barton  
 Barton organ number 258

**Pedal**

- 16' Tuba Complena
- 16' Bourdon
- 16' Tibia Clausa
- 8' Open Diapason
- 8' Concert Flute
- 8' Tibia Clausa
- 8' Tuba
- 8' String
- 8' String Celeste
- Great to Pedal
- 16' Piano
- 8' Piano

**Pedal 2nd Touch (backrail)**

- Bass Drum
- Cymbal
- Snare Drum
- Kettle Drum
- Thunder

**Accompaniment**

- 16' Viole (TC)
- 8' Open Diapason
- 8' Clarabel Flute
- 8' Tibia Clausa
- 8' Oboe Horn
- 8' Vox Humana
- 8' Clarinet

- 8' Kinura
- 8' Tuba
- 8' Viol d'Orchestre
- 8' Viol Celeste
- Blank
- Blank
- Blank
- 4' Flute
- 4' Tibia Clausa
- 4' Violin
- 4' Violin Celeste
- 2-2/3' Nazard
- 2' Piccolo
- 8' Chrysoglott
- Tambourine
- Castanets
- Tom Tom
- Wood Block
- Snare Drum
- 4' Accomp to Accomp
- 8' Piano
- 4' Piano

**Great**

- 16' Bourdon
- 16' Tibia Clausa
- 16' Vox Humana
- 16' Tuba
- 8' Open Diapason

- 8' Concert Flute
- 8' Tibia Clausa
- 8' Oboe Horn
- 8' Vox Humana
- 8' Clarinet
- 8' Kinura
- 8' Tuba
- 8' Viole d'Orchestre
- 8' Viole Celeste
- Blank
- Blank
- Blank
- 4' Principal
- 4' Flute
- 4' Tibia Clausa
- 4' Vox Humana
- 4' Clarion
- 4' Violin
- 4' Violin Celeste
- 2-2/3' Nazard
- 2' Piccolo
- 1-3/5' Tierce
- 2-2/3' Twelfth (Tibia)
- 8' Chrysoglott
- Cathedral Chimes
- Xylophone
- Glockenspiel
- 16' Great to Great
- 4' Great to Great
- 16' Piano
- 4' Piano

**Great 2nd Touch**

- 8' Tuba
- 8' Tibia
- 8' Clarinet

**Solo**

- 16' Tibia Clausa
- 16' Tuba
- 8' Open Diapason
- 8' Flute
- 8' Tibia Clausa
- 8' Oboe
- 8' Vox Humana
- 8' Clarinet
- 8' Kinura
- 8' Tuba
- 8' Viole d'Orchestre
- Blank
- Blank
- Blank
- 4' Flute
- 4' Tibia Clausa
- 4' Clarion
- Cathedral Chimes
- Xylophone
- Glockenspiel
- 8' Piano
- 4' Piano
- Piano Lights

**Tremulants**

- General Trem
- Tibia Clausa
- Vox Humana

**Toe Studs**

- Auto Horn
- Fire Gong
- Steamboat
- Siren
- Bird Song





Don Miller

George Wright at the Redford Barton console, 1982 (Jim Casterson photo)



Lee Irwin



The artist and the flappers—the first ever MCTOS program at the Redford:  
L-R: Holly Prim, Al Mason, Peggy Grimshaw (front) Gaylord Carter, Betty Mason, Maureen Lyon, Donna Lyon



# Building a New Backrail

BY MIKE BRYANT  
(All photos by the author)



A frequent job that comes our way is expanding the capacity of a backrail, which often involves adding a second row of tabs.

Wurlitzer backrails are fairly easy to do, since they are (a) relatively tall and (b) most are made from a single, flat piece of wood which sits vertically on the Solo manual cheeks. When we add a second row of tabs to a Wurlitzer, our big concern is the length of the bottom slot, because the curved panel under the horseshoe blocks some of the backrail real estate, and the point at which it intersects the backrail varies from model to model.

Kimball used a very different backrail design, and since this project involved a Kimball backrail and some unique challenges, we thought we'd do an article on it.

Kimball used buttons, often nicknamed “cash register keys” or “typewriter keys” because of their resemblance to the keys on old mechanical cash registers or typewriters, to operate effects—bird whistles, fire gongs, auto horns, and so on. These were mounted at the bottom of the rail, beneath the row of stops. The number of buttons varied; this one has four, but

*The original backrail in the console. Note the long tabs, a Kimball characteristic, and the spacing of the cash register keys. In this same space, we need to fit 50 SAMs, and retain the cash register keys*



upwards of a dozen on a small console is not unusual. When the button is pressed, it shorts a pair of contacts; a spring returns it to the rest position. Most have not been maintained well over the years, and work intermittently—if at all.

Kimball backrails differed in height throughout the different-size consoles. The small three-manual console backrails were designed to accommodate only one row of pneumatic-operated tabs. Converting from pneumatic to electric stop-action magnets (SAMs) is straightforward, but adding a second row is a major challenge.

Construction of the Kimball backrail is different as well. A Kimball backrail consists of four parts: a base, which screws to the Solo cheeks, and a three-layer vertical backrail. The slots are cut into the top layer; the middle layer forms the bottom of the slots. Why the plural “slots”? It has to do with how the backrail is assembled.

The base and middle layers screw to the bottom layer, and the top layer screws to the middle layer. The screws connecting the top and middle layer are positioned to fall between groups of stops. This is the same method used by Kimball to connect the top and bottom rails of the horseshoe.

The backrail is set back from the front edge of the base by about one inch, and is tilted back at about 5 degrees; this backward tilt, when combined with the downward slope of the Solo manual, positions the backrail straight up and down.

If the job involves extending the existing single row, that’s pretty much a piece of cake. Just separate the backrail layers, mount the upper section to a fixture to hold it at the correct angle, and use a stack dado cutter on a table saw. Work your way across. You’ll probably have to relocate or sacrifice some screws, but just keep one in each end and the SAMs will hold everything in place just fine.

This project, though, requires fitting 50 SAMs, and retaining the four cash register keys. That’s a lot more tabs than the original was ever intended to hold. The project’s console is a small three-manual which had been electrified several years ago, and somewhere along the line the backrail had already been expanded by extending the single slot. A number of indicator lights had been added here and there and, with one exception, no labels. There were several different sizes, styles, and colors—including a row of LEDs along the bottom which were presumably indicators for the transposer. There were 16—seven flat and

*From top:*

*We’ve sanded the finish off the middle layer to better illustrate how the Kimball backrail is built.*

*Fitting the new backrail to the base prior to drilling for mounting. At this point, no modifications to the base have been made*

*It’s ready to go off to the finisher to be matched to the original color*





eight sharp, with the “neutral” position being green and the remainder red.

We determined that the best layout for the 50 stops would be:

- Top row: Accomp 2nd Touch, 14 tabs; Tremulants, 6 tabs
- Bottom row: Pedal, 5 tabs; Accomp, 10 tabs; 4 cash register keys; General, 2 tabs; Great, 6 tabs; Solo, 7 tabs.
- We also added a small “Crescendo Active” LED just above the cash register keys which will light when the crescendo pedal is moved to the first active position.

Because the client wanted to keep the cash register keys, we had to split the lower row of SAMs. Fortunately for symmetry, we were able to work it out so we had 15 tabs on each side. The right side has one additional divider, so it’s actually out of balance by 1/8", but that isn’t noticeable. The number of stops also dictated that we move the cash register keys closer together than their original 1-3/8" spacing.

Adding the second row of SAMs is where things get tricky. First issue is available vertical height.

A Syndyne or Peterson SAM occupies just a touch less than 2-7/16" from top to bottom of the frame. Stacking two, therefore, requires at least 4-7/8". Unfortunately, the original backrail on this project was 4-5/8" tall—a quarter-inch less than what we need. The existence of a separate base allows us to “cheat” a little to get the additional height we need.

The base, which is a pretty substantial piece of African mahogany, is strong and thick enough for us to cut a slot in it to allow the lower frame of the SAM to extend down. Problem one solved—almost.

When the lower SAMs are mounted, the lower screw hole almost perfectly aligns with the joint where the base and the backrail meet. Not ideal for strength, or to assure the SAM won’t loosen up and move with use.

*From top:*

*Back from the finisher, lower felt in place, and the cash register keys are test fit*

*The new switching for the cash register keys consists of a group of four microswitches which are operated by the horizontal shorting bars on the key arms. The center contact is for the Crescendo LED*

From top:

The brackets on each end were added to provide additional support for all the weight we added, most of it high up on the backrail; the aluminum L-channel running along the back of the base is to counteract a downward bow which existed

Here, the aluminum bar "clamp" is visible; the clamp locks the bottom of the SAMs in place as a substitute for individual screws on each SAM

The (nearly) finished product; all that's left is the addition of trim strips between the ends of the rows and the end of the backrail



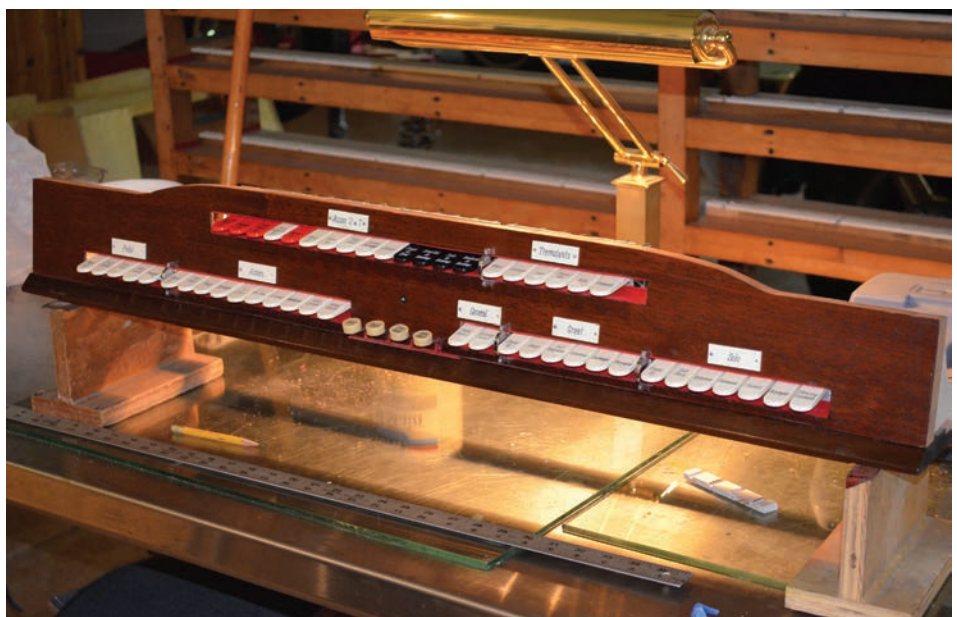
To overcome this issue, we cut the slot in the base back about 1/16" so there would be a slight gap between the frame of the SAM and the wood of the base. We then cut a piece of 1/8" aluminum bar and drilled mounting holes along the bottom edge, plus one on each end closer to the top. A quick run on the stationary belt sander fitted with an 80-grit belt put a good rough surface on it.

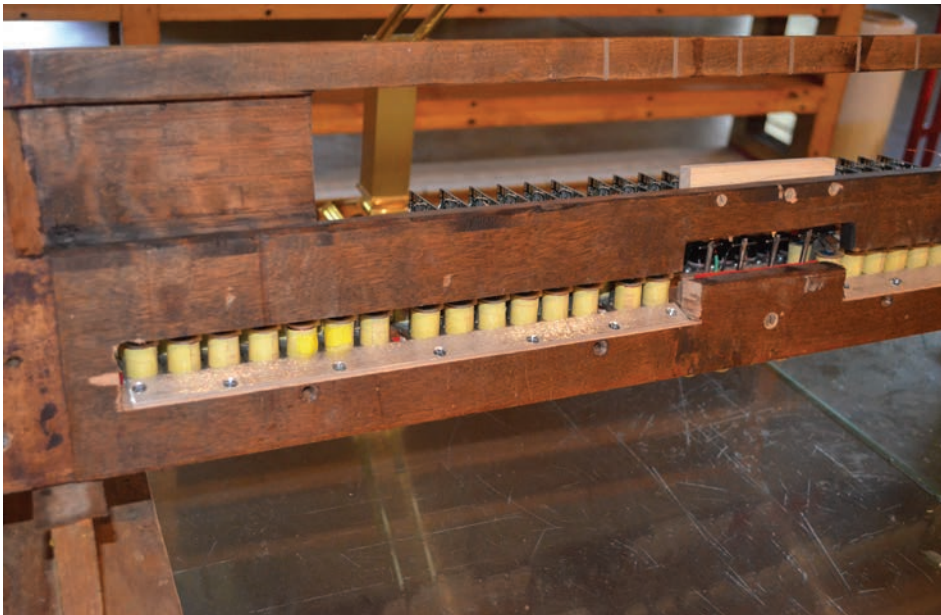
The bar functions as a clamp to hold the bottom of the SAMs in place. By adding that slight gap, we were able to apply more pressure to the SAM than would have been possible if the slot had remained in perfect alignment with the backrail. Not only does the clamp add pressure to the bottom of the SAM frame, the edge of the vertical backrail provides a fulcrum point to effectively increase the pressure against the frame.

Because the backrail tilts backward relative to the base, we also had to cut a groove in the base to allow room for the circuit boards on the SAMs. But, since African mahogany is a very dense wood, we weren't concerned about the groove weakening the base.

The next issue was to come up with a new switching method for the cash register keys. The alterations we made to the base made it impractical to use the old keying method, even with new contacts.

The actuators are straight metal rods about 1/8" in diameter, with a horizontal pin through them about halfway along the length to hold them in the mounting blocks and another at the end, which served to short the contacts. The mounting blocks are mounted directly behind a 1/4" slot; a coil





*The two long slots didn't originally exist in the base. They are as deep as they are to allow a relatively straight alignment between the screw head and a screwdriver if the bar needs to be removed.*

*The trim strips are applied with burned shellac; now that they're in place, it's ready to ship. Job done.*

spring is set into a recess in the base and acts against the actuator to return it when the key is released. It was the springs which presented the first issue.

Of the four old springs, there were three different lengths and two noticeably different tensions. The tension on all the springs seemed to us to be too light (for our taste, at least). A visit to our local "if you can't find it there they probably don't make it" hardware store failed to produce a close match to the originals. However, after about a half-hour of hunting through the spring room (yes, an entire room—actually, two rooms—devoted to springs) we managed to find something which could be adapted to work.

Because they were a slightly smaller diameter than the originals and the holes in the base in which they seated had been

drilled for the originals, we had a problem with the new springs working out of line and falling over under the actuator arm. The solution was to cut a short piece of 5/16" oak dowel, then use a 1/4" Forstner bit in the drill press to drill a recess in the end. We twisted the spring into the recess and fitted the whole thing into the 5/16" hole in the base. Problem solved.

The tricky part of that process was drilling the recess. The recess, being 1/16" smaller in diameter than the dowel, had to be absolutely perfectly centered. Drilling it out would leave only a 1/32" wall. Any deviation from absolute center would result in a weak spot in the wall, which would surely break out and we'd be back to square one.

Our solution was to make a simple fixture out of a piece of scrap wood clamped to the drill press table and drill a shallow 5/16" hole to receive the piece of dowel. Then, without moving the fixture or the table on the drill press, we replaced the 5/16" bit in the chuck with the 1/4" bit and drilled the dowel. We left enough "solid" wood below the recess but above the level of the fixture to get hold of the dowel with a pair of needle-nose pliers and gently prise it out.

This is the sort of operation that would be easily done with a lathe; that and a mortising machine are about the only two pieces of woodworking equipment that we don't have in the shop, but would put to good use if we did. That said, with care we were able to make these small parts perfectly well, and we've made plenty of mortises in the past.

Once we had the SAMs mounted, it was apparent that we had added quite a bit of weight up high. African mahogany is very dense, but many species of that mahogany are endangered and it can be difficult to find at a reasonable price. What is generally sold as "mahogany" may be a less-dense Philippine or Honduran mahogany. It looks very similar, and with a finish on it you'll never know the difference, but because it is less dense a screw will strip out more easily if it is over-tightened.

This can be an issue with a Kimball backrail because the only support is the screws through the base. Originally there were more, but with our modified design we had to sacrifice those directly below the lower-row slots. That left us with one on each end and one in the middle, between the second and third cash register keys.

On top of that, they go into the backrail at an angle, not straight in; that's a result of the backward tilt.

To assure that we wouldn't someday get a call from the client saying "the backrail fell over..." we added a bracket to each end, much like the brackets on a Wurlitzer backrail. That gave us a good, secure mounting with no worries about strength.

To sum up, we had to come up with some creative solutions in order to accommodate the organ specification and also satisfy the client's goal of retaining the "signature" cash register keys. We had to think a bit outside the box, and the things we thought would be the simplest turned out to be the most challenging.

But with patience and perseverance, we prevailed and delivered a beautiful and functional piece to the client. We're looking forward to receiving a picture from him showing the new backrail in the finished console. When we get it, we'll give you a look—perhaps on the website.

## A Stressful Situation Arises

A common complaint about SAMs is that the tabs come loose. Trying to tighten one so that it won't loosen up again is frustrating, because the upper screw (the culprit) can't be reached with the SAM in place.

There are things to keep in mind when you order tabs and again when you mount them, that will minimize the likelihood they will loosen up. First, if you order them drilled, specify the upper hole is to be counterbored, not countersunk. Counterboring puts a flat bottom on the hole; countersunk holes have sloped sides.

If you drill them yourself, counterboring is a two-step process. First, you'll drill the flat-bottom hole partway through, using a Forstner bit. Then, you'll use the depression left by the center of the Forstner bit to center the twist drill bit for the through hole.

A countersunk-drilled tab requires a flathead machine screw. If you overtighten it, you run the risk of the screw acting as a wedge and cracking and breaking out the tab around the hole.

A counterbored hole, on the other hand, uses a panhead machine screw. You can tighten that screw down with far less concern about damaging the tab, and it is less likely to loosen up.

For years, we've added a drop of medium-strength threadlocker to the upper screw, and sometimes a drop of burned shellac to the SAM tongue just for a little more security. Both the threadlocker and the burned shellac can be easily broken free, but aren't likely to give up without some encouragement from you.

That's where we got in trouble.

Remember we said we had to fit 50 SAMs on the new backrail; the original had 28. While we were waiting for Syndyne to deliver the 22 new SAMs, we received the tab order from Hesco and mounted them on the existing SAMs.

We used threadlocker—just a tiny drop—on the upper screw. The next day we came into the shop and looked at the SAMs lined up on the worktable. The red and black tabs were just fine; the ivory tabs were coming apart!

Some of the tabs showed a spider's web of cracks, and some had simply disintegrated. The remains—chunks of what used to be tabs—were laying on the bench.

A couple of e-mails back and forth with Cheryl Mogenson from Hesco got us to the bottom of the issue.

Cheryl and her team did some research with the manufacturer or the threadlocker and the vendor of the tab stock. It seems that the formulation of the ivory-colored stock has changed. It is now made of an acrylic plastic, and use of threadlocker on acrylics is not recommended, as it may result in stress cracks—even a tiny drop can do the damage.

The manufacturer of the threadlocker suggested being careful to keep the threadlocker only on the threads and not let it contact the plastic—not exactly a realistic suggestion, in our opinion.

"But," I hear you ask, "If the threadlocker is just on the threads, how does it attack the plastic?" The answer is "capillary action." That's the same phenomenon that enables you to crisp up a stalk of (slightly) limp celery by cutting off the bottom and setting it in a glass of cold water.

The threadlocker migrates up and down the length of the threads, and when it comes in contact with the plastic, it attacks it and the stress-cracks (and worse) result.

We'll suggest sticking to burned shellac, which can be put on the threads as well as on the tongue. The only sticking point is you have to make it up, but there are plenty of Internet sources for instructions on how to do it—and most importantly, how to do it safely.

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# Mystery Photo



This is the console from the Wurlitzer boardroom, which now controls the organ in the residence of Ned and Jan Niemiec of Lakeville, Massachusetts. It was one of the featured instruments during the Overture day for the Providence, Rhode Island convention a few years back.

It's a very beautiful and unique console, as you may recall from an article in the Journal about a year ago.

So, there's no real mystery associated with the console, except the identity of the fellow on the bench.

Do you know our mystery organist?

## The Mystery Gong revisited

I had a call from Seattle organ man Greg Smith the other day, who offered some additional information about the “mystery gong” we featured in a recent issue. Our question: “What did Wurlitzer call it?”

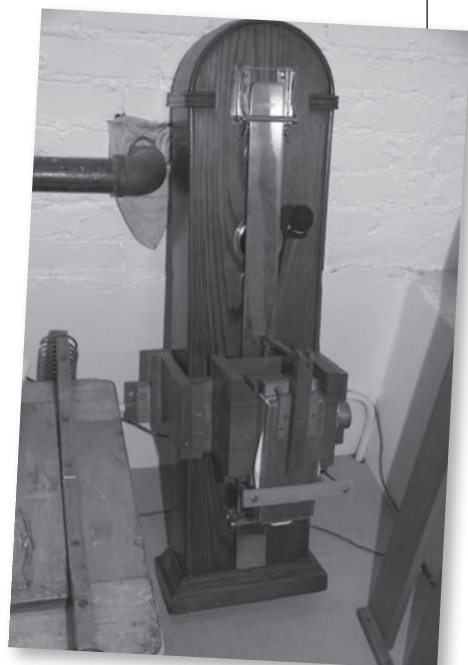
Many years ago, Greg and Jerry Gould traveled to the San Francisco Bay Area, to the home of the late Ron Downer (although he wasn't “the late” at the time). Many of you will recognize that name—Ron was very active in the theatre organ world for many years, and amassed quite a collection of organ parts (and organs), some common and some not so common.

As the Colonial Theatre article noted in the history of Wurlitzer Opus 585, it began life as an 18-rank 260 Special. After being removed from the Hippodrome Theatre in Buffalo, New York, it spent a number of years in a private residence in Canada. Then it was played over 20 years in a pizza parlor in Fresno, California, before being acquired by the Delaware Valley chapter and, ultimately, installed in the Colonial Theatre in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania. At some point, it acquired the gong.

Back to Greg and Jerry's visit to Ron Downer...while they were there, Jerry spotted this gong and tried to buy it. Jerry doesn't know if it's the same gong as the one attached to Opus 585 today or a different one, but the circumstances suggest it may well be the same unit. One of the circumstances, of course, is that nobody apparently has ever seen another one like it....

No sale. Ron told Jerry he already had sold it to another buyer. We might speculate that the other buyer was Roland Kurek who, you'll recall, purchased Opus 585 when it came out of the pizza parlor (but never installed it before his passing). If that's correct, then we at least have some explanation for how this thing came to be part of Opus 585.

But—our question was “What did Wurlitzer call it?” We still don't know for sure, but Ron Downer referred to it as a “Stroke of Midnight.” If this triggers any activity in the little gray cells of some of our Wurlitzer trivia experts, drop us a note!



# Chapter News

## ATLANTA

Atlanta—You Can't Stop the Music! So goes a popular song and so it is with the Atlanta chapter, as chapter artists Ron Carter, Rick McGee, John McCall, Larry Davis, and Ken Double entertained audiences around the South and elsewhere with concerts and silent films. Chapter organists regularly make music at the Strand Theatre in Marietta, the Tivoli Theatre in Chattanooga, the Rylander Theatre in Americus, and the mighty Fox Theatre in Atlanta.

It's March and it's raining. Time for a trip to the beautiful residence of Lori and David Burud in Sharpsburg, Georgia to hear their equally beautiful Allen GW4. "It was a perfect chapter meeting," said Larry Davis, the artist of the day. A beautiful setting, a phenomenal instrument wonderfully voiced, a (mostly) planned program by Mr. Davis, followed by hours of entertainment from a varied group of chapter organists including Misters. McCall and McGee, the fabulous Bob Fountain and finally our host David Burud who, responding to insistent coaxing, played almost a whole program himself to an enthusiastic audience!

Our program in late April featured Danny McCollum of Sumterville, Florida at the keyboards of the Allen GW4 in the Strand Theatre. Danny was a finalist in the ATOS Young Organist competition in 2013, and is now a classical organ student at the University of Tampa. Danny has played for our chapter in the past, but everyone present was amazed at his musical development since that time, especially complimenting his creative registrations—something that is a forte of Danny's—on whatever instrument he plays.

The day of Danny's program, 60,000 people came to the Square for the annual Taste of Marietta. Some visitors wandered into the theatre, were welcomed, and stayed as Danny introduced them to a new taste—in the musical arts. Their response: "We'll be back!"

—Larry Davis

Larry Davis, President

770-428-4091, [acatos@earthlink.net](mailto:acatos@earthlink.net)



Larry Davis at the Burud residence  
(Photo by Elbert Fields)



Danny McCollum at the Strand Theatre  
(Photo by Elbert Fields)

## CENTRAL INDIANA

Indianapolis, Indiana—On Sunday, March 15, CIC presented our first theatre organ concert for 2015. David Gray from Scotland was our featured artist on the chapter's 3/18 Barton at the Warren Performing Arts Center (WPAC) in Indianapolis. David gave an outstanding performance that had everyone exclaiming at intermission and again after the program. It was a delight to have David in Indianapolis.

A celebration of life for John Ferguson was held on March 22. John's friends and colleagues gathered to share stories and music in remembrance of John. He will be greatly missed. We thank chapter member John Seest for hosting the event in his home.

We found ourselves back at WPAC for our April business meeting and social. John Lauter from the Detroit area made the trip to Indianapolis as guest artist for the day. He played a very enjoyable and entertaining program on the Barton. This was John's first time to play for one of our chapter socials, and we hope he will return. An honorary life membership was bestowed upon long-

time member and former chapter president Barbara Johnson by current chapter president Tom Nichols. Barbara and her husband Paul have served the chapter tirelessly through the years, on committees, convention duties, and organ restoration crews. Congratulations, Barbara!

If you are in the Indianapolis area on Sunday, October 11, we invite you to enjoy Justin LaVoie in concert at WPAC at 2:30pm. For more information, please visit our website at [www.cicatos.org](http://www.cicatos.org).

—Mike Rolfe

Tom Nichols, President

317-417-7414,

[thomas.nichols1970@yahoo.com](mailto:thomas.nichols1970@yahoo.com)



Tom Nichols and Barbara Johnson  
(Photo by Mike Rolfe)

## CHICAGO AREA

Chicago Illinois—We gathered at the Arcada Theatre in St. Charles on March 22 to hear the 3/16 Marr & Colton/Geneva organ for what may be the last time, as CATOE is getting ready to begin a much-needed restoration of this unique theatre organ. Taylor Trimby provided the afternoon of music for the good crowd which included many local residents, the result of a very nice article in the local paper regarding the restoration. The organ is used several times per month to provide pre-show music for the live acts that appear on stage. We thank Ron Onesti and his staff for all their support; we're lucky to have such a great team to work with. Should you wish to help us with the restoration of the organ, please send your tax-deductible donations to CATOE, P.O. Box 2631 Joliet, Illinois 60434. We greatly appreciate any and all support for this one-of-a-kind installation.

April 19 saw a very special social at the University of Saint Mary's of the Lake in Mundelein. This was the first time CATOE



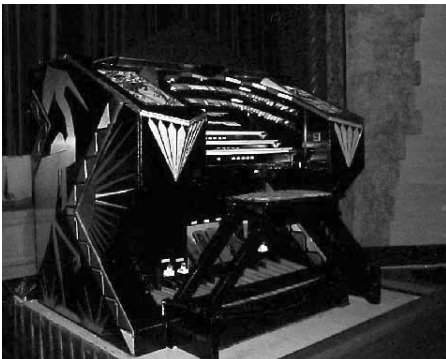
has held a social there since the console rebuild began almost two years ago. David Rhodes played a fantastic performance on the 4/21 Wurlitzer to the delight of the crowd. His program included both theatre and classical songs which showed David's talents and the versatility of the Wurlitzer. Many first-timers in attendance were amazed at the powerful range of the big Wurlitzer, brilliantly demonstrated by the medley from South Pacific that David played for us.

Several people enjoyed open console time including Judy Matarelli and new CATOE member Nicholas Renkosik.

—Taylor Trimby

David Rhodes, President

630-687-0380, [DVRhodes85@gmail.com](mailto:DVRhodes85@gmail.com)



The Marr & Colton/Geneva console at the Arcada Theatre (Photo by Taylor Trimby)



David Rhodes (Photo courtesy of David Rhodes)

## CHICAGOLAND

Chicago, Illinois—I expected to be greeted by one or more of the three 25-lb. cats, Bobby, Adler, or Sullivan, but they were hiding in the attic office. I love to go early, taking time to visit in the living room of Dennis Scott and Thom Day's cozy Chicago bungalow, munch on nuts, watch bubble lights on the tree, or browse through a coffee-table book. Next,

a walk through the kitchen, where enticing aromas are signs of the food to come.

The lower level is a "speakeasy" with small lighted tables and fiber-optic lighting around the bar. Many were already helping themselves to soft and hard liquids and appetizers. Dennis provided the music from 2:00 to 4:00pm at the historic Raymond Shelley console running the virtual 85-rank Wurlitzer pipe organ with 12 audio channels. He began with the Paramount 450 sample set (50 pipe ranks), then added another 35 ranks to simulate acoustics in a studio. Dennis is such a fine organist—I'm glad he didn't hire anyone else to entertain. "Put On Your Christmas Smile," a song he wrote, is a keeper! His selections featured castanets, traps, tambourines, and a jazzy piano.

Pearl White's daughter and husband were introduced prompting Dennis to play Pearl's "double touch" style on "Crazy Rhythm" and "I Want To Be Happy." Thom brought in the tablet and set Dennis up to accompany the 1921 silent film *Never Weaken*, starring Harold Lloyd. Dennis did a swell job—with no rehearsal!

Next, the delicious dinner that included Beans ala Jack Daniels—Yummo! The joint was jumpin' from 5:00 to 8:00pm with the fabulous Fairfield Orpheans house band. Their Dixieland music just tickles your toes and makes you want to dance. Yes, I smiled all the way home. Thanks Dennis, Thom, and CTOS for the Happy Holiday Party!

—Jan Challender

Jan Challender, President

815-726-7665, [janfromjoliet@gmail.com](mailto:janfromjoliet@gmail.com)

## DELAWARE VALLEY

Cheltenham, Pennsylvania—On Sunday, March 22, 2015, TOSDV was pleased to present Rudy Lucente in concert on our Wurlitzer 3/24 theatre pipe organ in the Colonial Theatre in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania. Rudy was joined in his presentation of *Broadway and Beyond* with two outstanding vocalists, soprano Amanda McDonald and baritone John Frederick. Selections featured Amanda and John together, as solists, and Rudy alone at the console. As many of you may know, Rudy is one of the organists at the Wanamaker organ in the Macy's store in Philadelphia. Both of the vocalists had strong and wonderful voices which were enjoyed by our audience. We did

learn that Amanda and John, long time vocal partners, are now married and expecting their first child. All of the music offered this afternoon was well received by the audience. Thank you Amanda, John, and Rudy.

On Saturday, April 25 we were guests at the home of TOSDV members Mimi and Dick Auchincloss in St. Davids, a suburb of Philadelphia. We were there for an open console meeting with Dick's three-manual Rodgers theatre organ. Among those playing were Sally Sorber, Dick Metzger, 13-year-old Bret Miller (our newest member), as well as our host, Dick Auchincloss. The organ was in fine form and was enjoyed both by those playing and those listening. Mimi and Dick are great hosts and we thank them for their hospitality.

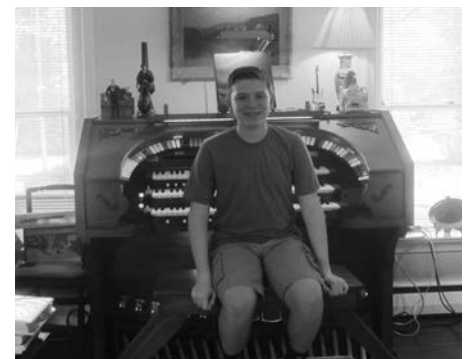
—Dick Metzger

Wayne Zimmerman, President

610-429-5378, [WayneZimSr@aol.com](mailto:WayneZimSr@aol.com)



John Frederick, Rudy Lucente, and Amanda McDonald (Photo by Dick Metzger)



Bret Miller at the Auchincloss Rodgers (Photo by Dick Metzger)

## EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Wellesley, Massachusetts—EMCATOS anticipated the arrival of spring with its seventh annual Members Day Extravaganza, featuring ten participants. Selections covered

# Chapter News

popular, ragtime, movie, show, classical, and standard music. The classical number was a piano solo, lending superb variety to the show. Every performer played a part in reaching the chapter's goal of providing fine entertainment at all chapter meetings. Again, the introductions by Linda Duncan were interesting and informative.

The chapter's March concert featured internationally renowned virtuoso organist Jonas Nordwall at Babson College and at the Shanklin Music Hall. These were delightful programs that demonstrated the superior skill and inclusive content that visitors expect from Jonas: hoedown, tango, burlesque, and big band, to name a few of his styles.

The April social took place at the home of member Ned Niemiec, with a program entirely performed by the chapter's own young organist, Seamus Gethicker. This event gave Seamus an opportunity to present a complete program and turned out to be a fine social event for EMCATOS.

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



*The cast of Members' Day Extravaganza: (back row) Dick Hill, Ed Surette, Bill Mitchell, Herb Mower, Jim Duncan, Bruce Netten, (front row) John Phipps, Tom Snow, Dorothy Hill, Linda Duncan, and Roger Austin (Photo by Charles Briggs)*



*Seamus Gethicker at the Niemiecs' Wurlitzer (Photo by Charles Briggs)*

## GARDEN STATE

Little Falls, New Jersey—Nathan Avakian took us outside the box with his performance at the Loews Jersey this month. The 4/23 Wonder Morton was used to accompany a collection of short films from the International Youth Silent Film Festival, a program that challenges young filmmakers to create three-minute silent movies matched to original theatre organ compositions. Nathan composed the arrangements he used to bring life to the modern versions of a vintage art form. More original accompaniment was presented by Nathan to give life to a brand new short film from Los Angeles producers Aaron Leddick and Christopher Farley called *Lost and Found*, as well as a newly-restored 1912 short from the Thanouser Company, titled *The Star of the Side Show*. The audience was also treated to more integration of 20th and 21st century music when the theatre pipe organ was paired with a technologically-produced orchestra of unique sounds in concert. This is where the performance was at its most creative and sparked a great deal of conversation.

Crew members continue to restore and refine the capabilities of our various instruments on a regular basis. The Rainbow Room Wurlitzer, the Brook Arts Center, and the Peekskill Paramount organ all receive loving attention. Other recurring events continue also, such as having organists "play the house in" for monthly classic film offerings at the Loews Jersey Theatre. Bob Maidhof, Paul Citti, Sy Mendel, and Earle Seely provided the music most recently for these well-attended events. Loews crew members are also always on hand for these showings in case of emergency, but they usually get to hear the whole music set because the Wonder Morton remains reliable as well as resonant.

—Catherine Martin, President  
973-256-5480, cmartin@cse.edu



*Nathan Avakian at the Loews Jersey Wonder Morton (Photo by Tony Rustako)*

## JOLIET

Joliet, Illinois—We were extremely busy getting ready for our Extravaganza at the end of April. On March 16 we had a young man, Tim Duckworth from Indiana, play for us as our guest artist. Tim was the young artist of the year several years ago and played the Barton as if he had played it all his life. He is self-taught, and I hope we hear him again real soon.

Our beautiful Extravaganza is over now and it was quite successful. Saturday evening we had a 40-piece symphony orchestra from Joliet play for us. We were awestruck, they were so good. Next, we were thrilled to hear four organists, Jelani Eddington, Clark Wilson, Pierre Fracalanza, and Jerry Nagano. They blew our minds.

Our crew chief, Glenn Tallar, was introduced and came out in a full tuxedo and played for us. Glenn is multi-talented and plays at Beggar's Piazza in Lansing.

Our evening ended with the 40-piece orchestra playing a patriotic song as our beautiful American flag was lowered at the back of the stage. There wasn't a dry eye in the house.

Sunday afternoon we drove to the Sanfilippo estate in Barrington to hear each of the four artists play a half-hour concert on the largest theatre pipe organ in the world. The Sanfilippo family opens their home to raise millions for many charities each year.

We were then shuttled by golf cart to a huge building housing a full merry-go-round where we were served desserts and beverages. We were invited to ride the merry-go-round, which many of us did. What wonderful memories that brought back!

Please set aside a couple of days next April to come join us at our 20th Extravaganza. We have lots of new surprises....

—Barb Petry  
Jim Patak, President  
708-562-8538, [jpatak31@att.net](mailto:jpatak31@att.net)

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## LONDON & SOUTH OF ENGLAND

Woking Surrey—Yorkshire-born organist Kevin Grunill performed our March concert. His tuneful programme, coupled with jovial and informative introductions, made for a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

Not only is Kevin a good musician, he also works full-time in the rebuilding and restoration of theatre organs through the Penistone Cinema Organ Trust. The Trust hold regular concerts at the Paramount in Penistone, South Yorkshire, a small but beautifully kept theatre which houses the Compton organ originally installed in the Odeon Cinema, Birmingham, UK. Kevin's latest project is "The Astoria Centre" where a group of volunteers are converting an industrial unit into a musical venue which will eventually house 40 ranks of mainly Compton pipework. Currently 12 ranks are playing and a recent open weekend demonstrated the huge amount of quality work already done on an instrument which will be used for concerts, practice and social events, and a venue which will also provide workshop and teaching facilities.

It was a great pleasure to welcome another native of Yorkshire, willing to travel many miles, to present our concert in April. Howard Beaumont's vast experience entertaining the public over several decades shone through a most entertaining programme. His use of the organ brought forth stylings and sounds that we have never previously experienced, a true mark of a dedicated musician keen to keep the organ scene alive and full of variety. You needed to be there if you have never heard a remarkable imitation of lively banjo music on a theatre organ! By way of contrast his frequent use of delicate combinations and solo voices meant that his occasional climaxes to full organ were particularly effective—and an object lesson to others.

Our recent annual general meeting took place at Woking, with several members having the opportunity to play our Wurlitzer after the business meeting.

—Peter Collett  
Nick Ashton, Chairman  
+44 7580 332217,  
[chairman@atos-london.co.uk](mailto:chairman@atos-london.co.uk)



Kevin Grunill at the Astoria Centre, Barnsley  
(Photo by Peter Collett)



Howard Beaumont at Woking  
(Photo by Len Rawle)

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## LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles, California—Thanks to our loyal membership and their recruitment efforts, LATOS has seen a nice bump in membership in recent months. We have been working hard to explore new collaborations with different organizations, and those partnerships have proven to be successful and exciting. It is always a delightful experience to see someone enjoy one of our pipe organs for the first time. It's thrilling for the new member, as well as those of us who've been around awhile!

Our recent open console at the historic Wilshire Ebell was a resounding success. There were new members who enjoyed their time at the console, and received helpful and enthusiastic coaching from Steve Asimow and

Sterling Yearian. We owe a debt of gratitude to Steve for his tireless dedication to the Wilshire Ebell organ; we can always rely on him to get things ready before any Ebell event, and he stays long after the last person leaves to make sure we leave the place in perfect condition.

It was fun to see Bill Field, long time LATOS member and owner of the Old Town Music Hall, take a turn at the console. Bill performs nearly 200 times a year at his theatre in El Segundo, and does more than anyone in Los Angeles to keep the theatre pipe organ a vital part of our cultural landscape. It was an honor to have him attend our open console—and take the Barton through its paces.

—Angie Hougen, President  
818-667-4785, [Hougen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Hougen@sbcglobal.net)



Bill Field (Photo by Tony Wilson)

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## NEW YORK

New York, New York—On March 28, the New York Theatre Organ Society hosted *King of Kings* at Chaminade High School. Bernie Anderson did an outstanding job accompanying the silent film on Chaminade's 3/15 hybrid. On April 12, Bernie accompanied another film, *Ben Hur*, on NYTOS' traveling Allen GW319EX at Peconic Landing. The very large crowd consisted mostly of non-NYTOS members, and they loved the film and accompaniment. Special thanks to Dominic Antignano, Joe Amato, John Vanderlee, and the Hilsenbecks for their help with this event.

—Dan Minervini  
Steven Frank, Chairman  
718-456-9741, [Steve@virgilfox.com](mailto:Steve@virgilfox.com)

# Chapter News



The NYTOS crew at Peconic Landing: (L-R) John Vanderlee, Walter Hilsenbeck, Bernie Anderson, and Joe Amato. (Photo by Joe Amato)

## NORTH TEXAS

Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas—For the chapter's first activity of the year, we presented the silent film *Oliver Twist* with child star Jackie Coogan in the lead. Our emcee, Mike Tarzis, related the story of how Coogan's earnings were mishandled by his parents and frittered away. This resulted in the establishment of "Coogan's Law" which protects the earnings of child actors

Bob Whiteman capably provided the music on the NTC-MPAC 3/18 Wurlitzer.

On May 2 our chapter will present the silent movie *Tumbleweeds* starring William S. Hart. This is the first western that NTC will have presented to the public. Musical score and emcee duties will be in the capable hands of Mike Tarzis on the 3/18 Wurlitzer. It is planned to be quite the program with appropriate stage props, such as an authentic-looking western gun belt, other accoutrements, and bells and whistles during the program. As is necessary for a silent western film, free popcorn will be provided!

It should be quite the show....

—Kenneth E. Brown

Don Peterson, President

972-422-7757, dpete.tx@verizon.net

## OHIO VALLEY

Cincinnati, Ohio—On December 11 the Society for the Preservation of Music Hall (SPMH) in co-operation with the Ohio Valley chapter of ATOS put on a morning and evening holiday program which has become a Cincinnati holiday tradition! Organist Mark Herman returned to Music Hall's ballroom to

perform everyone's favorite holiday tunes on the Mighty Wurlitzer. Herman was joined by vocalist Anthony Snitker and dancers from the Cincinnati Ballet.

The attendance at these two programs was the largest in the five-year history of Mighty Wurlitzer concerts, begun in December 2010. The next program is scheduled for May 12, 2015, a silent film with Clark Wilson. For information on the Ohio Valley chapter contact Joe Hollmann at [jhollmann@fuse.net](mailto:jhollmann@fuse.net)

—Michael Kahsar

Joe Hollmann, President

513-729-0786, [jhollmann@fuse.net](mailto:jhollmann@fuse.net)



Mark Herman and the Cincinnati Ballet (Photo by Phil Groshong)



Over 900 attended the Holiday Concert at the Cincinnati Music Hall Ballroom (Photo by Phil Groshong)

## OLD DOMINION

Great Falls, Virginia—Twelve ODTOS members and others attended a brilliant concert by David Gray at the northern Virginia home of Jack and Mildred Hardman on March 28. Most of the Hardman Studio 4/38 Wurlitzer was acquired from the estate of Dick Simonton who lived in Hollywood, California. Dick founded the American Theater Organ Society (American Theatre Organ Enthusiasts, as it was known then),

and became its first president during an organizational meeting held at his home in February, 1955.

ODTOS members attending the concert (left to right in the picture), included Bob Goldsmith, John DeMajo, Jack Hardman, Jim Reinhart, Lynda Reinhart, David Barnett, Oscar Olson, Charles Hague, and Mike DeWalt. Not pictured are Mildred Hardman, Mark Thomas, and Ron Stonehouse.

—Charles Hague, President  
804-859-6426, [president@odtos.org](mailto:president@odtos.org)



ODTOS members with David Gray, (center, seated) at the Hardman Studio Wurlitzer console (Photo by Mark Thomas)

## ORANGE COUNTY

Fullerton, California—For such a young organist, Mark Herman sure hit one out of the park last Sunday afternoon at Plummer Auditorium in beautiful downtown Fullerton! His selections varied from single songs to medleys in equal measure. Each was exquisitely performed and perfectly suited to both Mark and the instrument. It was almost a songbook taken from other organists, but each definitely had Mark's own style and pizzazz. Each composer, had he heard the song that he penned, would have been smiling from the first note until the last.

Just to be different, Mark did something I had ever seen before. He ended his first half with a Buster Keaton movie, with the console in the pit. That allowed a concert riser for the second half. Well done, Mark! At one of the venues that I frequent monthly, a very knowledgeable person told me, "Remember, don't play a (classical) song that everyone knows unless you can play it perfectly and well..." No problem here. There were not many numbers, but the medleys more than compensated.

Mark's stage presence is also very impressive. He appeared truly amazed at the length of the applause after each of his songs.

The good-sized crowd was better than usual at Plummer Auditorium lately.

The only thing that I can say is if you missed this outing of a great organ played by a very skillful and arty young man, you missed a chance to hear a great organ and a great performer. Mark will be performing later this year at the Old Town Music Hall in El Segundo, and if you are not present, you will miss what I can see as another grand performance.

—Pat Mower

Ed Bridgeford, President  
714-529-5594, [www.octos.org](http://www.octos.org)



Mark Herman greets the fans  
(Photo by Pat Mower)

## PUGET SOUND

Seattle, Washington—The full house at Kenyon Hall on the afternoon of April 18 was eager with anticipation for Donna Parker's concert on the fine 2/13 Wurlitzer. So it was a surprise when hall master Lou Magor introduced Martin Ellis, Donna's long-time musical partner, to share the stage. Their first number left no doubt that Ellis was a worthy collaborator. Parker and Ellis took turns at the piano and organ, playing a wide range of genres. By the end, the audience was clearly awed by both performers' consummate musicianship.

The Wurlitzer sounded excellent, thanks to preparation by its chief technician, Bob White. In addition to the musical treats, many in the audience partook of the hall's trademark root beer floats and other goodies served by volunteers at intermission. The concert was a joint venture by Kenyon Hall and PSTOS.

—Jamie Snell

Jeff Snyder, President  
206-546-0975, [jeff@pstos.org](mailto:jeff@pstos.org)



Donna Parker and Martin Ellis at the Kenyon Hall Wurlitzer (Photo by Jo Ann Evans)

## RED RIVER

Fargo, North Dakota—Many changes have been taking place within the RRATOS chapter recently. Our board members have changed only slightly, with Alex Swanson as our new chapter president, Lance Johnson maintaining the role of treasurer, and Faye Crume as the secretary.

The Facebook page has been resurrected again by Ryan Hardy and will be a great way to promote upcoming chapter events in the community. Pictures of the Fargo Theatre and Weld Hall Wurlitzers have been added to the ATOS theatre organ locator as well. Find and like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/pages/Red-River-Chapter-of-The-American-Theatre-Organ-Society/132316496845211](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Red-River-Chapter-of-The-American-Theatre-Organ-Society/132316496845211).

Our March 22 meeting was held at the Hardy house. Topics consisted of brainstorming ideas, growing membership, a history lesson from Lance Johnson about the two Wurlitzer organs in the community, and several proposed additions to the Wurlitzer at the Fargo Theatre. A wonderful potluck dinner was followed by several interesting videos featuring the Hardys' trip to Wisconsin and Ryan's organ lessons at the Fargo Theatre via Skype.

Several changes are currently in progress for the 4/28 Wurlitzer at the Fargo Theatre. Lance Johnson and Sonia Carlson have been working diligently on installing the new Gamba and Gamba Celeste in the orchestral chamber, as well as working out several software bugs with the assistance of Mike Johnson of Johnson Organ Co. There has been a great amount of trouble with getting a third organ blower in the basement working correctly, but with any luck it will be installed and in use very shortly. The organ gets played

frequently throughout the week, before the evening movies and for practice time.

—Ryan Hardy

Alex Swanson, President  
701-540-8930, [apswanson@hotmail.com](mailto:apswanson@hotmail.com)



Lance Johnson installing the Gamba chest  
(Photo by Mike Hardy)

## RIVER CITY

Omaha, Nebraska—RCTOS held their March 15 chapter meeting at the Skyline Retirement Community in Omaha. The facility is home to a Conn 3-manual organ and a grand piano. Annually, RCTOS entertains independent living facility residents during January, February and March. Vice president Jeanne Sabatka normally heads the entertaining program; however, since she was recuperating from surgery, Greg Johnson, Jerry Pawlak and Janet Domeier provided the residents with a great musical afternoon laced with an Irish theme as St. Patrick's Day was just around the corner.

The April 19 chapter meeting was held at the Markworth residence with guest artist Justin Stahl. This is the chapter's annual spring pot luck. Justin commanded the Markworth Kimball to a full-house audience—in spite of the cold and rainy day. His program was extremely well received with several encores—even after the dinner was served. It was evident that Justin has a sincere passion for music. See Justin's videos on our website.

RCTOS is proud to host the 2015 Summer Youth Camp in Omaha. The camp base will be the Markworth residence, home of the 3/24 Kimball, with sessions at the Rose and Orpheum Theaters' Wurlitzers.

RCTOS annual concert at the Rose Theater 3/21 Wurlitzer will be on Sunday,

# Chapter News

August 9, 2015 at 3:00pm. It will feature our marvelous Dave Wickerham, a short silent comedy, and the Omaha Street Percussion.

Visit our website: [www.rctos.com](http://www.rctos.com) for current news, concert information and videos.

—Jerry Pawlak

Bob Markworth, President  
402-573-9071, [kimballorgan1@msn.com](mailto:kimballorgan1@msn.com)



Greg Johnson, Janet Domeier, and Jerry Pawlak at Skyline Retirement Community  
(Photo by Jerry Pawlak)



Justin Stahl at the Markworth residence  
(Photo by Jerry Pawlak)

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Denver, Colorado—Our March club social at the Holiday Hills ballroom featured the affable Dave Neimann of Neimann music store in Cheyenne. He ably demonstrated the many capabilities of the beautiful and technically-advanced Roland Atelier Platinum organ transported from his store. The instrument included digital pipe- and tonewheel organ, and modern synthesizer sounds. A number of our chapter members enthusiastically own these instruments and belong to a club.

The Denver Paramount was once again a popular location for the 11th annual *Doors Open Denver* walking tour in April, with 676 visitors during the weekend. Non-stop music on the 4/21 twin-console Wurlitzer was provided by organists Jim Calm, Bob Castle, Bob Flinn, DeLoy Goeglein, Doug Thompson, and Kevin Utter. Theatre tours were provided by Lee Shaw and Tim Cissell. Wes Ranstrom demonstrated “How a Pipe Organ Works” in the lobby and set up a Howard seat on stage. Club treasurer Rich Brooks set up a CD- and information table by the front doors and, with his friendly associates, made all visitors feel welcome. Projectionist Jim Wagoner gave projection booth tours and told his wonderful stories. The Mighty Wurlitzer was prepared by master pipe organ technician Don Wick and crew. It performed flawlessly.

Exciting new additions this year were appearances by vocalist Donna Smith and banjoist John Mumford, accompanied by the Wurlitzer. Donna belted out some hot Sophie Tucker jazz tunes and John’s Dixieland banjo had the house rocking.

—Jim Calm

Ryan Kroll, President  
[rkroll@colfax.com](mailto:rkroll@colfax.com)



Kevin Utter at the Denver Paramount Publix 1  
(Photo by Bill Kwinn)

## ST. LOUIS

St. Louis, Missouri—The March meeting of the Saint Louis Theatre Organ Society (SLTOS) was hosted by Dennis Rathert at his home in Crestwood, Missouri. It was a beautiful sunny Sunday afternoon with warm temperatures and low humidity, and the patio screen door of our host’s music room was open for the fresh spring air. Dennis has an Allen 319, and has recently acquired a Hammond. The featured organist of the day was our own vice president, Dave Stephens. He played a wonderfully varied program on both organs of music composed as early as 1916 up to the 1940s. Then, none other than our ATOS board member Jack Moelmann took an impromptu seat at the Allen and then moved over to the Hammond to play more favorites. This was followed by duets between Jack and Dave as they alternated playing the Allen and the Hammond to everyone’s delight.

It was a dreary, rainy day in O’Fallon, Illinois. Nevertheless, a good crowd of SLTOS members and guests came to Jack Moelmann’s home for the April 19 meeting. On short notice Jack had graciously agreed to have the meeting at his home due to unforeseen circumstances that prevented it from being held where scheduled. This resulted in our group being able to enjoy the full extent of Jack’s extensive model train layout in HO, N, and Z scale. As usual, Jack put on a wonderful show on both his highly modified Rogers console, and his new Allen Chapel Historique, performing several songs from his musical theatre repertoire. Jack was joined by



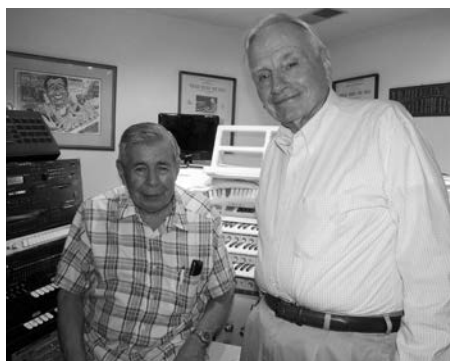
Donna Smith belts out a tune at *Doors Open Denver* (Photo by Bill Kwinn)

his friend Winn Pardee, a vocalist from his church, who beautifully sang two songs for us while accompanied by Jack on the organ. Then Jack invited Dave Stephens to play a few duets with him. It was a very enjoyable afternoon.

—Gary Broyles  
Jim Ryan, President  
314-416-0146



March meeting host Dennis Rathert with Dave Stephens and Jack Moelmann (Photo by Gary Broyles)



April meeting host Jack Moelmann with vocalist Winn Pardee (Photo by Gary Broyles)

## SOONER STATE

Tulsa, Oklahoma—On Friday, March 13 the Sooner State chapter was honored to have Bob Heil as our special guest artist. Bob began his musical career in his early teens and, at age 15, was house organist for the Fox Theatre in St. Louis. In his 20s, Bob designed and built various theatre pipe organ installations in St. Louis and at the Holiday Inn North, performing six nights a week for eight years. He then opened his own professional music business in Marissa, Illinois.

To honor his former teacher Stan Kann's memory, Bob opened the evening with a song that Stan began his concerts with. We heard a great variety of song selections ranging

through all decades of music with each having very interesting and different registrations than we are accustomed to—along with a composition of his own! It was a great evening of entertainment enjoyed by all!

Our program for April was titled *Spring is in the Air*, consisting of our chapter's own local artists playing our favorite spring songs. Since April is a month which usually contains all types of weather conditions, this was appropriately reflected in the songs selected for the evening.

Our program chairman, Carolyn Craft, started the evening off with a medley focusing on spring, love, tulips, and rainbows. Phil Judkins, Lynda Ramsey, and Joyce Hatchett followed with songs which about rain showers, clear days, blue skies, robins, clover, and roses. Wes Eaton followed with a song just about the summertime. Paula Hackler was next with a medley about love, singing, parades, and ways to spend an evening. Our president, Bill Rowland, closed with an arrangement about romance, how great the world in which we live is and a great ragtime. Once again, a great evening enjoyed by all.

—Paula Hackler  
Bill Rowland, President  
918-355-1562, Ragtimebill@gmail.com



Bob Heil in concert at the Sooner State chapter (Photo by Rudy Geissler)



Spring Program participants (L to R) Joyce Hatchett, Paula Hackler, Wes Eaton, Lynda Ramsey, Phil Judkins, Carolyn Craft, Bill Rowland (Photo by Rudy Geissler)

## SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY

York, Pennsylvania—We had a great turnout for our first showcase in 2015 on Monday, April 6. It was nice to see so many members and guests attending, and we hope the guests will come back again and join SVTOS. Connor Ream and Dan Umholtz, two of our youngest members, did a superb job showing off their talents on the Capitol Theatre's Wurlitzer in York. Their attendance at the ATOS Summer Youth Adventures over the last several years really paid off.

Our special musical guest was Mark Ream on the snare drum, joining his son Connor on three selections. Connor displayed his theatre organ style with a Jesse Crawford number, "I Love to Hear You Singing"; Dan demonstrated a more classical style with his "Blue Danube." Both Connor and Dan displayed the depth of the organ with their different styles. Everyone enjoyed their programs and we want to have them both back again.

Our April 26 program was a 1925 Rudolph Valentino silent film, *The Eagle*, held at the Allen Theatre in Annville and accompanied by Don Kinnier. This was the first in a series of three silent films which SVTOS is presenting at the Allen Theatre and they are open to the public. Don is well known for his outstanding ability to accompany silent films, and he is in demand throughout the East Coast. Don is also one of the convention artists at this year's ATOS convention in Philadelphia.

Before the silent film we showed selections from a documentary titled *The Movie Palaces*, narrated by Gene Kelly. The selections featured some of the great movie theatres of the 1920s and '30s, many of which, sadly,

# Chapter News

no longer exist. Don did a superb job accompanying the silent film. He will be back again in May and June to accompany the remaining two silent films.

—Roy Wainwright  
Barry Howard, President  
717-274-2254, pres@svtos.org



Connor Ream and Dan Umholtz at the Capitol Theatre (Photo by Larry Fenner)



Don Kinnier (Photo by Larry Fenner)

## VALLEY OF THE SUN

Phoenix, Arizona—One could probably call the cheerful Ellen Brown our chapter

sweetheart. She has played our February program two years in a row at the First Christian Church Fellowship Hall. Ellen is a music teacher at Phoenix College where we are restoring a theatre organ, and she is very supportive of the chapter. Most of her program consisted of love songs and other ballads. Johnny Sharp accompanied her on the piano on a few of her selections. A fun sing-along brought Ellen's program to a close. Later, Johnny was seated at the organ for open console, followed by Ken Iverson.

During our pizza buffet luncheon at Organ Stop on March 15, Charlie Balogh played a varied program of ballads and up-tempo selections. Some were audience requests, including a medley of Irish songs for St. Patrick's Day. The music of George Gershwin and some film songs were also crowd-pleasers.

Our first Orpheum Youth Experience was a success last year, so we held a second one on April 26. Teachers, music students and their families gathered at the theatre to hear and play the Wurlitzer. Bradley Steinbauer got things started at the organ with 30 minutes of favorite tunes. John Bittner gave a brief history of the theatre organ in general. As John explained the ranks of pipes, Don Story played snippets of music to demonstrate the various sounds. Organ crew member Pete Knobloch showed examples of different pipes, and produced a tone from each one. Each of the students (and a couple of brave adults) took a turn at the organ. Afterwards, everyone enjoyed open console as six of our very talented chapter members (plus Bradley's four-year-old daughter) took turns on the bench.

Check our website, [vots-atos.org](http://vots-atos.org), for photos of our activities.

—Madeline LiVolsi  
John Bittner, President  
480-239-2822, [jbittner@zumagroup.com](mailto:jbittner@zumagroup.com)



Don Story, Jack Carty and Bradley Steinbauer (Photo by John Bittner)



Johnny Sharp and Ellen Brown at First Christian Church (Photo by John Bittner)

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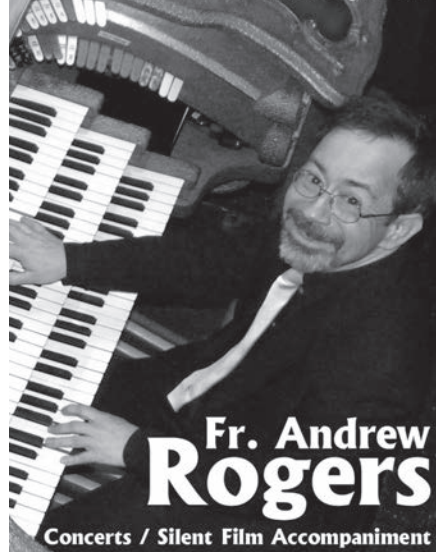
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# Around the Circuit

Theatre Organ Programs  
and Performances

Around the Circuit items may be submitted at any time, using the online form ([www.atos.org](http://www.atos.org)—click on “Events Calendar”). Submissions must be received by the tenth of the odd-numbered month prior to publication to be included in the upcoming issue.

We strive for accuracy; however, the information contained in Around the Circuit is presented as submitted. ATOS is not responsible for errors resulting from unreported changes to schedules, venue, and contact information.

## UNITED STATES

### ALASKA

State Office Building—333 Willoughby Avenue, Juneau, 907-465-5689 (2/8 Kimball) [www.pstos.org/instruments/ak/juneau/state-bldg.htm](http://www.pstos.org/instruments/ak/juneau/state-bldg.htm). Organ concerts Friday at 12:00 noon.

### ARIZONA

**Organ Stop Pizza**—1149 E Southern Avenue, Mesa, 480-813-5700 (4/78 Wurlitzer) [www.organstoppizza.com](http://www.organstoppizza.com). Charlie Balogh, Lew Williams. Evening Entertainment: Winter organ hours: Monday through Thursday, 4:30pm to 9:00pm; Friday 4:30pm to 10:00pm; Saturday 3:30pm to 10:00pm; Sunday 4:30pm to 9:00pm. Summer organ hours: Monday through Thursday, 5:30pm to 9:00pm; Friday 5:30pm to 10:00pm; Saturday 4:30pm to 10:00pm; Sunday 4:30pm to 9:00pm.

### CALIFORNIA

**Avalon Casino Theatre**—1 Casino Way, Catalina Island, 310-510-2414 (4/16 Page) [www.ecatalina.com/about-movie-theatre.html](http://www.ecatalina.com/about-movie-theatre.html). Pre-show concert, Friday and Saturday, 6:15pm, John Tusak.

**Old Town Music Hall**—140 Richmond Street, El Segundo, 310-322-2592 (4/26 Wurlitzer). Organ played before and during shows, including silent movies. The theater opens on Friday at 8:15pm, Saturday 2:30pm, and Sunday at 2:30pm.

**Johnson's Alexander Valley Winery**—8333 Highway 128, Healdsburg, 707-433-2319 (3/10 Robert-Morton). Daily, in tasting room, from 10:00am to 5:00pm.

**El Capitan Theatre**—6838 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, 800-DISNEY6 (4/37 Wurlitzer) [www.elcapitantickets.com](http://www.elcapitantickets.com). Pre-show concert. Organ played daily before shows. House Organist: Rob Richards, Staff Organists: John Ledwon, Ed Vodicka, and Ty Woodward.

**Harmony Wynelands**—9291 E Harney Lane, Lodi, 209-369-4184 (3/15 Robert-Morton) [www.harmonywynelands.com](http://www.harmonywynelands.com). Tasting room open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 11:00am to 5:00pm, or by appointment. Bob Hartzell, live and recorded performances.

**Orpheum Theatre**—842 S Broadway, Los Angeles (3/14 Wurlitzer) [www.laorpheum.com](http://www.laorpheum.com). Organ is featured as part of the guided tour of the theatre Saturday at 11:30am.

**Grand Lake Theatre**—3200 Grand Avenue, Oakland, 510-452-3556 (3/18 Wurlitzer). Intermission concerts. Intermissions: Friday, Warren Lubich; Saturday, Kevin King.

**Paramount Theatre**—2025 Broadway, Oakland, 510-465-6400 (4/27 Wurlitzer) [www.paramounttheatre.com](http://www.paramounttheatre.com). Public tours on first and third Saturday at 10:00am, starting at the box office.

**Stanford Theatre**—221 University Avenue, Palo Alto, 650-324-3700 (3/21 Wurlitzer). Organ played before and after the 7:30pm movie by David Hegarty, Jerry Nagano, or Bill Taylor. Call ahead to verify theatre is open for the evening.

**Paramount Iceland**—8041 Jackson Street, Paramount, 562-633-1171 (3/19 Wurlitzer) [www.paramounticeland.com](http://www.paramounticeland.com). Organ is played for skating sessions on Tuesday evenings from 7:00pm to 8:30pm, featured artist, Bill Campbell.

**Castro Theatre**—429 Castro Street, San Francisco, 415-621-6120 (4/21 Wurlitzer) [www.castrotheatre.com](http://www.castrotheatre.com). Intermissions played nightly by David Hegarty, Warren Lubich.

**Arlington Theatre**—1317 State Street, Santa Barbara (4/27 Robert-Morton) [sbtos.org](http://sbtos.org). Pre-show and intermissions for movies every Friday.

**Bob Hope Theatre**—242 E Main Street, Stockton (4/21 Robert-Morton). Organ played monthly by Dave Moreno before and after each movie.

**Fox Theatre**—308 W Main Street, Visalia, 559-625-1369 (4/24 Wurlitzer) [www.foxvisalia.org](http://www.foxvisalia.org). Thirty-minute organ prelude, with guest organist, to frequent classic movies.

### FLORIDA

**Polk Theatre**—121 S Florida Avenue, Lakeland, 863-682-7553 (3/12 Robert-Morton). Friday and Saturday, 7:10pm; Sunday, 1:40pm. Rodney Charles, Bob Courtney, Jim Helwig, Don Jeerings, Heidi J. Wuerfele, and Darrell Stuckey.

**Pinellas Park City Auditorium**—4951 78th Avenue, North Pinellas Park, 727-557-6087 (3/11 Wurlitzer). Free concert, third Tuesday of every month from 11:30am to 1:00pm.

**Grace Baptist Church**—8000 Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota, 941-371-0070 (4/32 Wurlitzer). Open console following most monthly meetings Sept. thru Dec., April and May. Professional concerts in January, February and March.

**Tampa Theatre**—711 N Franklin Street, Tampa, 813-274-8981 (3/14 Wurlitzer) [www.tampatheatre.org](http://www.tampatheatre.org). Pre-show concert. Wednesday: Chaz Bender; Thursday: Bob Courtney; Friday: Sandy Hobbs; Saturday: Bob Logan.

### GEORGIA

**Rylander Theatre**—310 W Lamar Street, Americus, 229-931-0001 (3/11 Möller) [www.rylander.org](http://www.rylander.org). Pre-show concert. Organ featured for pre-show productions of the Sumter Players and other events.

**Fox Theatre**—600 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta, 404-881-2119 (4/42 Möller) [www.foxtheatre.org](http://www.foxtheatre.org). Larry-Douglas Embury plays before most shows.

**Grand Theatre**—119 S Main Street, Fitzgerald, 229-426-5090 (3/18 Barton) [www.fitzgeraldgrand.org](http://www.fitzgeraldgrand.org). Organ is played 60 minutes before every film, 6 nights a week, monthly Sunday silent film series at 3:00pm. Films accompanied by staff organist, Jon Durkovic. Features include Laurel & Hardy, Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin, and others. All silent film series proceeds go to the organ fund.

**Earl Smith Strand Theatre**—117 N Park Square NE, Marietta, 770-293-0080 (GW4Q Allen digital) [www.earlsmithstrand.org](http://www.earlsmithstrand.org). Organ played 30 minutes before movies and special events with organist Ron Carter and associate organists Ken Double, John McCall, Larry David, Rick McGee, Misha Stefanuk, Bob Fountain, and Phillip Allen.

### HAWAII

**Palace Theatre**—38 Haili St., Hilo on the Big Island of Hawaii, 808-934-7010 (4/13 Robert-Morton) [www.palacehilo.org](http://www.palacehilo.org). Rick Mazurowski plays from 6:30pm until 7pm every Tuesday night before the movie. Occasional silent movies, concerts and special events featuring the organ. Organists also include Walter Greenwood and Tommy Stark.

### ILLINOIS

**Lincoln Theatre**—103 E Main Street, Belleville, 618-233-0018 (3/15 hybrid) [www.lincolntheatre-belleville.com](http://www.lincolntheatre-belleville.com). Movie overtures: Friday, David Stephens; Saturday, volunteers.

**Tivoli Theatre**—5021 Highland Avenue, Downers Grove, 630-968-0219 (3/10 Wurlitzer) [www.classiccinemas.com](http://www.classiccinemas.com). Organ interludes Friday and Saturday evenings 30 minutes before both evening shows by David Rhodes or Tim Charlton. June 27, 2015 10:00am, June 27, 2015 2:00pm: Walt Strony, David Wickerham.

**Rialto Square Theatre**—102 N Chicago Street, Joliet (4/27 Barton). Organ pre-shows and intermissions: Jim Patak or Sam Yacono. Theatre tours with Jim Patak at the console.

**Beggar's Pizza**—3524 Ridge Road, Lansing, 708-418-3500 (3/17 hybrid) [www.beggarspizza.com/location-il-lansing.php](http://www.beggarspizza.com/location-il-lansing.php). Tuesday and Friday, 6:00pm and 9:00pm: Glenn Tallar.

**Arcada Theatre**—105 E Main Street, St. Charles (3/16 other) Geneva / Marr & Colton [www.onestientertainment.com/arcada/arcada.htm](http://www.onestientertainment.com/arcada/arcada.htm). Organ interludes Friday and Saturday nights. May 17, 2015 7:00pm, May 30, 2015 8:00pm, June 6, 2015 8:00pm, June 28, 2015 5:00pm: Taylor Trimby, David Rhodes.

### INDIANA

**Warren Performing Arts Center**—9500 E 16th Street, Indianapolis, 317-251-6962 (3/18 Barton) [www.cicatos.org](http://www.cicatos.org). October 11, 2015 2:30pm: Justin LaVoie.

### IOWA

**Orpheum Theatre**—520 Pierce Street, Sioux City, 712-258-9164 (3/21 Wurlitzer) [www.orpheumlive.com](http://www.orpheumlive.com). Organ is used by the Sioux City Symphony and for special events. Call for schedules.

### MASSACHUSETTES

**Hanover Theatre**—Southbridge Street, Worcester, 508-831-0800 (4/35 Wurlitzer) [thehanovertheatre.org](http://thehanovertheatre.org). The Hanover organ is regularly used for pre-show music at events. For a list, please visit: <http://thehanoverorgan.org>.

### MICHIGAN

**Music Museum House**—7377 US 31N, Acme, 231-938-9300 (3/12 hybrid) [www.musicmuseumhouse.org](http://www.musicmuseumhouse.org). September 18, 2015 6:00pm: Andrew Rogers; September 19, 2015 7:30pm: Andrew Rogers; October 24, 2015 5:30pm: Andrew Rogers; October 25, 2015 5:30pm: Andrew Rogers; November 27, 2015 7:00pm: Andrew Rogers; November 28, 2015 5:30pm, November 28, 2015 7:30pm: Andrew Rogers.

**Michigan Theater**—603 E Liberty, Ann Arbor, 734-668-8397 (3/13 Barton) [www.michtheater.org](http://www.michtheater.org). Lance Luce, Andrew Rogers, Stephen Warner, Henry Aldridge, Newton Bates. 3/13 Barton and Hammond C2 in the Annex Theatre played daily before movies and for special occasions. Henry Aldridge, Chief Organist; Stephen Warner, Andrew Rogers, Newton Bates, House Organists.

**Stahls Automotive Museum**—56516 N. Bay Drive, Chesterfield (Wurlitzer) [stahlsauto.com](http://stahlsauto.com). Organ is played every Tuesday from 1pm to 4pm and on the first Saturday of each month between 11am and 4pm. Organist John Lauter or played by computer.

**Redford Theatre**—17360 Lahser Road, Detroit, 313-537-2560 (3/10 Barton) [www.redfordtheatre.com](http://www.redfordtheatre.com). Before every film presentation by various local artists. Every other Friday at 8pm. Every other Saturday at 2pm and 8pm. Call to confirm. July 26, 2015 2:00pm: Justin Lavioie.

**Senate Theater**—6424 Michigan Avenue, Detroit, 313-894-4100 (4/34 Wurlitzer) [www.dtos.org](http://www.dtos.org). Organ overtures and intermission music at events by Dave Calendine, Paul Jacyk, John Lauter, Lance Luce, Lynn Walls, Kevin Werner. June 28, 2015 3:00pm: Ron Rhode; September 20, 2015 3:00pm: Bill Tandy; October 18, 2015 3:00pm: Ken Double; November 15, 2015 3:00pm: Nathan Avakian; December 6, 2015 3:00pm: John Lauter. Organ concerts, \$15 at the door.

**Flint Institute of Music**—1025 E. Kearsley Street, Flint (3/11 Barton) [thefim.org/affiliated-organizations/530-flint-theatre-organ-club](http://thefim.org/affiliated-organizations/530-flint-theatre-organ-club). October 17, 2015 7:00pm: Andrew Rogers.

**Public Museum of Grand Rapids Meijer Theatre**—272 Pearl St NW, Grand Rapids, 616-459-4253 (3/30 Wurlitzer). Tours by appointment, and TSO guests welcome to hear organ weekly on Friday Mornings. Story time slide program Wednesday mornings year-round.

**Ironwood Theatre**—113 E Aurora Street, Ironwood, 906-932-0618 (2/7 Barton) [www.ironwoodtheatre.net](http://www.ironwoodtheatre.net). Organ is featured as part of the guided summer tour Fridays at noon and 2 pm. October 31, 2015 7:00pm: Andrew Rogers.

**The Mole Hole**—150 W Michigan Avenue, Marshall, 616-781-5923 (2/6 Barton). Organ daily, Scott Smith: recorded artist.

**Temple Theatre**—203 N Washington, Saginaw, 989-754-7469 (3/11 Barton) [www.templetheatre.com](http://www.templetheatre.com). Organ is played before most events and tours on a regular basis by musicians Joanne Leach, Pat Portner, Arthur Ralph and Ken Wuepper.

## MINNESOTA

**Heights Theatre**—3951 Central Avenue NE, Columbia Heights, 763-789-4992 (4/11 Wurlitzer). Organ concert every Friday and Saturday before the first evening's show.

## MISSOURI

**Kansas City Music Hall**—301 W 13th Street, Kansas City, 913-568-2613 (4/28 Robert-Morton) [www.kctpo.org](http://www.kctpo.org). All events 2:00pm.

**City Museum**—701 N 15th Street, St. Louis, 314-231-2489 (3/17 Wurlitzer) [www.citymuseum.org](http://www.citymuseum.org). Organ heard every day the museum is open, via computerized relay or by organists from the St. Louis Theatre Organ Society.

**Fox Theatre**—527 Grand Boulevard N, St. Louis, 314-534-1678 (4/36 Wurlitzer) [www.fabulousfox.com](http://www.fabulousfox.com). Tours of the Fox Theatre conducted every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday (except holidays) at 10:30am. Tuesday tour: \$5 for adults and \$3 for children (12 and under). Thursday and Saturday tours: \$8 for adults and \$3 for children. For parties of less than 20, no reservations are needed. August 23, 2015 2:00pm: Jack Moelmann, Walt Strony, Lew Williams.

## NEW JERSEY

**Northlandz Music Hall**—Route 202 S, Flemington, 908-982-4022 (5/39 Wurlitzer). Call for exact times. Bruce Williams.

**Loews Jersey Theatre**—54 Journal Square, Jersey City, 973-256-5480 (4/23 Robert-Morton) [www.gstos.org](http://www.gstos.org). Organ played before movies and events on a regular basis. Bernie Anderson, Paul Citti, Eric Fahner, Bob Maidhof

**Broadway Theatre**—43 S Broadway, Pitman, 856-589-7519 (3/8 Kimball). Organists include Harold Ware, John Breslin, Janet Norcross, Nathan Figlio and Marilyn Rabbai.

**Rahway Senior Citizens Center**—1306 Esterbrook Avenue, Rahway, 732-396-3395 (3/10 Wurlitzer) Organ originally from New York Rainbow Room in Rockefeller Center. [www.gstos.org](http://www.gstos.org). Organ played monthly and for special events. Free public concert - first Thursday of every month.

## NEW YORK

**Proctor's Theatre**—432 State Street, Schenectady, 518-346-8204 (3/18 Wurlitzer) [www.proctors.org](http://www.proctors.org). Preshow music, concerts and silent films presented by the Hudson-Mohawk chapter of ATOS. Noon concert series, Tuesdays unless stated otherwise.

**Lafayette Theatre**—Lafayette Avenue, Suffern, 845-369-8234 (2/11 Wurlitzer). Saturday, 11:00am, Earle Seeley, Saturday evenings and Sunday before matinee: John Baratta and Earle Seeley.

## NORTH CAROLINA

**Carolina Theatre**—310 S Green Street, Greensboro, 336-333-2600 (3/8 Robert-Morton) w/ digital augmentation [www.carolinatheatre.com](http://www.carolinatheatre.com). Organ played before and after the Carolina Classic Film Series.

## NORTH DAKOTA

**Fargo Theatre**—314 N Broadway, Fargo, 701-239-8385 (4/26 Wurlitzer) [www.fargotheatre.org](http://www.fargotheatre.org). Organ plays Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evening, before and between performances. Short organ concerts: Lance Johnson, Tyler Engberg, Ryan Hardy and Alex Swanson.

## OHIO

**Cincinnati Music Hall Ballroom**—1241 Elm Street, Cincinnati (3/31 Wurlitzer) [www.spmhcincinnati.org/Music-Hall-History/Albee-Mighty-Wurlitzer-Organ.php](http://www.spmhcincinnati.org/Music-Hall-History/Albee-Mighty-Wurlitzer-Organ.php). Concerts, special events presented by the Ohio Valley chapter of ATOS.

**Palace Theatre**—Playhouse Square, 1615 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, 330-454-9181 (3/15 Kimball) [www.playhousesquare.org](http://www.playhousesquare.org). Frequent pre-show and intermission use; occasional concerts. Organ pre-shows for summer film series and special events.

**Ohio Theatre**—55 E State Street, Columbus, 614-469-1045 (4/34 Robert-Morton) [www.capa.com](http://www.capa.com). Organ overtures and intermissions.

## OKLAHOMA

**Tulsa Technology Center, Broken Arrow Campus**—4600 S Olive Avenue, Broken Arrow (3/13 Robert-Morton) [www.theatreorgans.com/soonerstateatos](http://www.theatreorgans.com/soonerstateatos). Sooner State chapter ATOS, 3rd Friday of each month, programs and open console.

## OREGON

**Bijou Theatre**—1624 NE Highway 101, Lincoln City, 541-994-8255 (3/17 Allen digital) [www.cinemalovers.com](http://www.cinemalovers.com). Silent film series on Wednesdays at 1:00pm.

**Cleveland High School**—3400 SE 26th Avenue, Portland (3/24 Kimball) [www.pps.k12.or.us/schools/cleveland](http://www.pps.k12.or.us/schools/cleveland). Open console at 7pm on the first Friday of the month during the school year.

**Oaks Amusement Park Roller Rink**—1 SE Spokane Street, Portland, 503-233-5777 (4/18 Wurlitzer) [www.oakspark.com](http://www.oakspark.com). The Wurlitzer is played for skating sessions on Sunday afternoons and evenings, special parties on Monday and on Thursday evenings. Keith Fortune is the principal organist, with Gary Russell and Dean Lemire as associates.

**Elsinore Theatre**—170 High Street SE, Salem, 503-375-3574 (3/25 Wurlitzer) [www.elsinoretheatre.com](http://www.elsinoretheatre.com). Silent film programs Wednesdays at 7:00pm. Rick Parks, organist.

## PENNSYLVANIA

**Keystone Oaks High School**—1000 Kelson Avenue, Dormont (3/19 Wurlitzer) [pittsburghtheatreorgan.com](http://pittsburghtheatreorgan.com). September 26, 2015 2:00pm: Hector Olivera.

**Grand Theater**—252 Main Street, East Greenville (2/6 Marr & Colton) [www.thegrandtheater.org](http://www.thegrandtheater.org). Organ is played before selected events.

**Roxy Theatre**—2004 Main Street, Northampton (2/6 Wurlitzer) [www.roxytheaternorthampton.com](http://www.roxytheaternorthampton.com). Organ is played 6:30pm to 7:00pm and intermissions. Henry Thomas.

**Strand-Capitol Performing Arts Center**—50 N George Street, York, 717-846-1111 (3/20 Wurlitzer) [www.strandcapitol.org](http://www.strandcapitol.org). Various Artists. Pre-Movie Organ Music provided by members of the Susquehanna Valley Theatre Organ Society on selected Sunday afternoons from 2:30 pm until 3:00 pm. Check the theatre or SVTOS website for dates.

## TENNESSEE

**Tivoli Theatre**—709 Broad Street, Chattanooga, 723-757-5156 (3/13 Wurlitzer) [www.chattanooga.gov/education-arts-and-culture/tivoli-theatre](http://www.chattanooga.gov/education-arts-and-culture/tivoli-theatre). Organ is played for occasional pre-shows and special events.

**Tennessee Theatre**—604 S Gay Street, Knoxville, 865-684-1200 (3/16 Wurlitzer) [www.tennessee-theatre.com](http://www.tennessee-theatre.com). Organ played before movies throughout the year and at free First Monday concerts, the first Monday of every month at 12:00 noon. Subject to cancellation due to other scheduled events.

## UTAH

**Peery's Egyptian Theatre**—2415 Washington Boulevard, Ogden, 801-395-3200 (3/24 Wurlitzer) [www.peeryegyptiantheater.com](http://www.peeryegyptiantheater.com). Silent films; entrance and exit music at some other programs.

# Around the Circuit

Theatre Organ Programs  
and Performances

## VIRGINIA

**Byrd Theatre**—2908 W Carey, Richmond, 804-353-9911 (4/17 Wurlitzer) [www.byrdtheatre.com](http://www.byrdtheatre.com). Overtures Saturdays at 7:15pm and 9:30pm, Bob Gulledege.

## WASHINGTON

**Mt. Baker Theatre**—106 North Commercial, Bellingham (2/14 Wurlitzer). Second Sunday monthly, 2:00pm, open console.

**Centralia Fox Theatre**—119 S Tower Avenue, Centralia (3/7 Wurlitzer) Style D Special. August 8, 2015 2:00pm, August 8, 2015 7:00pm: Jeff Fox.

**Lincoln Theatre**—712 S 1st Street, Mt. Vernon, 360-419-7129 (2/7 Wurlitzer) [www.lincolntheatre.org](http://www.lincolntheatre.org). Original installation organ played one-half hour prior to movies most Fridays through Tuesdays.

**Calvary Christian Assembly Church**—6801 Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle (3/19 hybrid) Wurlitzer/Kimball. September 27, 2015 2:00pm: John Atwell.

**Haller Lake Community Club**—12679 Densmore Avenue N, Seattle (3/9 hybrid). August 9, 2015 5:00pm: Pete Eveland, Ray Harris.

**Spokane First Church of the Nazarene**—9004 N Country Homes Boulevard, Spokane (3/26 Wurlitzer). Organ is used weekly in the 10:45am Sunday traditional service and for other concerts/open console sessions.

## WISCONSIN

**Organ Piper Music Palace**—4353 S 108th Street, Milwaukee, 414-529-1177 (3/27 Wurlitzer). Regulars include Dean Rosko, Zach Frame, Ralph Conn. Organ is played on: Tuesday, 5:30pm to 9:00pm; Wednesday, 5:30pm to 10:00pm with live band; Thursday, 5:30pm to 9:00pm; Friday, 5:00pm to 9:45pm; Saturday, 12:30pm to 9:45pm; Sunday, 12:30pm to 8:45pm.

**Hermes Basement Bijou**—Racine, 262-639-1322 (5/35 Wurlitzer). For tour information, contact Eileen at Racine County Convention Bureau, 262-884-6407, or Fred Hermes for appointments. Open console on weekends.

## AUSTRALIA

### NEW SOUTH WALES

**Orion Theatre**—155 Beamish Street, Campsie (3/17 Wurlitzer). Regular player afternoons on 2nd Thursday of the month, 1:30pm to 4:30pm. Contact Craig Keller at [craigkeller1966@gmail.com](mailto:craigkeller1966@gmail.com) to confirm. Players and listeners welcome.

**Orpheum Theatre**—380 Military Road, Cremorne (3/15 Wurlitzer). Saturday night, Sunday afternoon, intermissions, Neil Jensen.

**Marrickville Town Hall**—Marrickville Road, Marrickville, +61 2 9798 6742 (2/11 Wurlitzer). Regular player's evenings 4th Monday night of each month, 7:30pm. Call Neil to confirm.

### QUEENSLAND

Kelvin Grove State College—Victoria Park Road, Kelvin Grove (3/11 Christie) [www.tosa-qld.org](http://www.tosa-qld.org). 1st Sunday of each month - open console etc

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**Capri Theatre**—141 Goodwood Road, Goodwood, +61 8 8272 1177 (4/29 Wurlitzer) [www.capri.org.au](http://www.capri.org.au). Organ played before evening sessions on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday nights.

## VICTORIA

**Dendy Cinema**—26 Church Street, Brighton, +61 3 978 1455 (3/15 Wurlitzer). Organ before films, Saturday evenings.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**John Leckie Music Centre**—Melvista Avenue, Nedlands (3/12 Compton) [www.tosa-qld.org/](http://www.tosa-qld.org/). Regular player afternoons on the first Sunday of each month (March to November) at 2:00pm. Free admission. Players and listeners welcome. Contact Rodney Raymond at [email@tosawa.org.au](mailto:email@tosawa.org.au) for more information.

## UNITED KINGDOM

### DERBYSHIRE

**Pipes in the Peaks**—Dovedale Garage, Thorpe, Ashbourne, +44 01335 350258 (3/18 Compton) [www.pipesinthepeaks.co.uk](http://www.pipesinthepeaks.co.uk). October 17, 2015 7:30pm: Stephen Foulkes; October 25, 2015 2:30pm: Robert Wolfe; November 29, 2015 2:30pm: Christian Cartwright; December 6, 2015 2:30pm: Stephen Foulkes; December 12, 2015 2:30pm: Stephen Foulkes; December 13, 2015 2:30pm: Christian Cartwright.

### DEVON

**Congregational Church**—Fore Street, Beer (2/6 Wurlitzer) Britain's Oldest Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ [www.beerwurlitzer.org.uk](http://www.beerwurlitzer.org.uk). July 11, 2015 2:00pm: Trevor Bolshaw; August 8, 2015 2:00pm: Simon Gledhill; September 12, 2015 2:00pm: Nicholas Martin; October 10, 2015 2:00pm: Damon Willetts; November 28, 2015 2:00pm: Matthew Bason.

## EAST SUSSEX

**Rye College**—Love Lane, Rye (2/6 Wurlitzer) Britain's Second Oldest Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ [www.ryewurlitzer.org.uk](http://www.ryewurlitzer.org.uk). July 26, 2015 2:30pm: Kevin Morgan; September 27, 2015 2:30pm: Janet Dowsett; October 25, 2015 2:30pm: John Mann; November 22, 2015 2:30pm: Nicholas Martin.

## MANCHESTER

**Theatre Organ Heritage Centre and Hope-Jones Museum**—Alexandra Road, Peel Green, Eccles (2/6 Wurlitzer) [lotf.org.uk](http://lotf.org.uk). Lunchtime concerts Wednesday every week, 1:00pm.

## WEST MIDLANDS

**Civic Hall**—North Street, Wolverhampton (4/44 Compton). Friday concerts 12:00noon to 12:30pm before the tea dance, Steve Tovey or Cameron Lloyd. Concerts Saturdays at 2:00pm.

## WEST YORKSHIRE

**Victoria Hall**—Victoria Road, Saltaire (3/11 Wurlitzer) [www.cinema-organs.org.uk](http://www.cinema-organs.org.uk). July 12, 2015 2:30pm: David Lowe, Robert Rowley; July 17, 2015 7:30pm: Phil Kelsall MBE; August 9, 2015 2:30pm: David Gray; August 28 through 31, 2015, Cinema Organ Society Northern Convention. Artists include: Howard Beaumont, Simon Gledhill, Richard Hills, Phil Kelsall MBE, Walf Strony, Christian Cartwright, Jonathan Eyre, Stephen Foulkes, Kevin Grunill, John Mann, Nigel Ogden; August 28, 2015 7:30pm: Phil Kelsall MBE; August 31, 2015 2:30pm: Walf Strony; September 18, 2015 7:30pm: Phil Kelsall MBE; October 11, 2015 2:30pm: Simon Gledhill; November 8, 2015 2:30pm: Robert Wolfe; December 13, 2015 2:30pm: Nicholas Martin.

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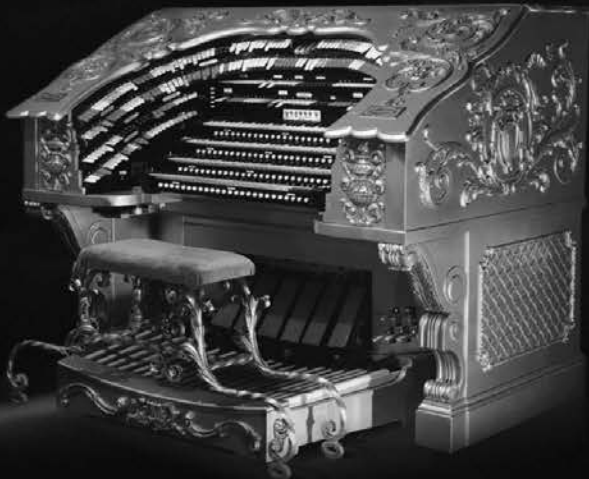
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# Closing Chord



## George C. Orbits

December 16, 1928—April 21, 2015

The theatre organ community lost one of its stalwart supporters with the death of George Orbits. George was known worldwide as the savior and protector of Wurlitzer Opus 1953, from Detroit's Fisher Theatre.

George was the son of Joseph and Beatrice Orbits, born in Detroit on December 16, 1928. His father owned one of the first Ford dealerships in Michigan, and sadly died when George was only five years old. While his mother went to work as a secretary, he was cared for by his Aunt Hattie. George graduated from Detroit's prestigious Cass Tech High School and in 1956 graduated from the Technical Institute with a certification in Engineering and Television Repair.

George married Muriel Grohs in 1951. While stationed in Portland, Maine with the Air National Guard they welcomed their first child Elizabeth in 1952. They returned to Michigan to set up house in Dearborn Heights. In 1953 son David was born, followed by Kathryn in 1959.

Upon discharge from the service, George joined Bendix Aerospace, where he worked on some of the first satellites. He moved to Ann Arbor in 1965, building the home he would live for the next 50 years. During this time he worked for both the Environmental Research Institute of Michigan (ERIM) and the University of Michigan. In 1977 he joined Science Applications Incorporated (known now as SAIC), transferring to the Dayton Ohio office for 18 years.

During these years he cultivated a close working relationship with the United States Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force

Base, specializing in radar and optics. He retired in 1995.

George's passion was the theatre pipe organ. He bought and removed the 3/6 Wurlitzer from the Lancaster theatre in Detroit. He had the organ set up and playing when the Fisher Theatre 4/34 special became available. The Fisher Brothers (known to many as the auto-body manufacturer—"Body by Fisher") wanted to improve the lot of the theatre bearing their name. By the late '50s the Fisher had become a "B" house, and was no longer attracting the clientele it once enjoyed. They planned, in conjunction with the Neiderlander family, to convert the auditorium and lobbies to a prime legitimate theatre. The 1928 Mayan interior was gutted. George was one of a handful of bidders for the Wurlitzer. The decision to sell came rather late, followed by an urgent need to remove the instrument before the interior demolition began. George assembled help from the known theatre organ enthusiasts in Detroit—long before there were clubs to connect people with this interest. They beat the demolition crew and got the organ out in something like four days. George planned a new home in Franklin, Michigan to be built around the organ, and at one point discussed selling off one chamber to make the organ fit the house. Fate stepped in at a crucial moment here—the day George and Muriel were to close on their un-built Franklin house, George was laid off.

The rest of the story is well-recorded history. Throughout the last 54 years George remained as the protector of the Fisher Wurlitzer. In the past decade his financial generosity has allowed for many improvements to the Senate theatre and the Fisher Wurlitzer.

Muriel passed away in 1999.

George was a man of quiet resolve, and a man of his word. His singular focus on Opus 1953 has seen this one-of-a-kind Wurlitzer through many decades.

—John Lauter

## Joseph Rementer

The Southern Jersey chapter mourns the loss of its president, Joseph (Joe) Rementer who passed on March 8, 2015 after a short battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 77.

The Allen had been found unused in a storeroom in Cherry Hill, New Jersey through some contacts at the local Presbyterian church. It is an electronic, three-manual pre-digital unit in good condition. After Joe cleaned and polished it to look like new, he installed it in his basement.

His work on organs went into full speed when he retired from his job with Philadelphia Electric in 1991. He started working full-time for C.W. Gibson, Inc. Pipe Organ Specialties on the installation and maintenance of pipe organs. Joe also found time to take full charge in the installation of a 4/17 Wurlitzer in the auditorium of Cinnaminson High School.

The pipe organ which joined the Allen in the basement consisted of pipes and console found in two separate locations. Pipes and chests had belonged to Rodman Wanamaker, the son of department store magnate John Wanamaker. The three-manual console was rescued from an Episcopal church in East Orange. Six additional ranks were included in the most recent installation. Joe installed the whole works and Chuck Gibson did the tonal work.

The organs made the basement the perfect place for chapter meetings. Members who could play, did while non-players were free to listen and talk. Joe always kept the business part of meetings short in order to leave time for playing and talking.

When the owner of the 90-year-old Broadway Theatre in nearby Pittman decided to restore the building to its original splendor, Joe knew that the 3/8 Kimball theatre organ there would make a good instrument to expose the South Jersey population to the mighty sound that was being heard less and less. The organ was in playable condition and could be kept that way for half-hour organ concerts before each stage presentation. Chapter members volunteered to play these short concerts, which are well-received by the audience.

Work on the Kimball and Wurlitzer will continue in Joe's memory.

—Fred Oltmann

# Theatre Organ

## ADVERTISING

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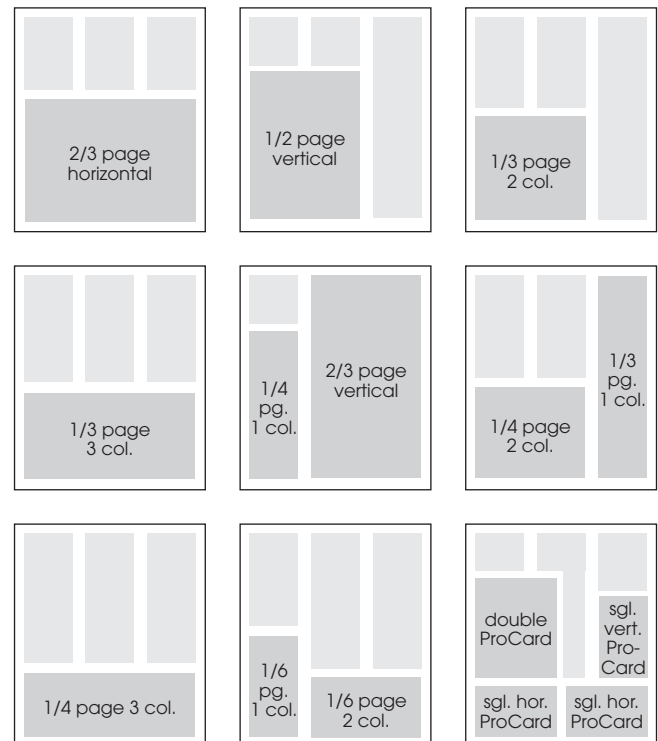
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