



DETROIT THEATER ORGAN SOCIETY

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July 2012



DTOS
Executive Board
& Directors

M E M B E R S ' C O N C E R T

Sunday, July 15, 2012 3:00 P.M.

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Join us at the Senate Theater for our annual Members' Concert. This relaxed-atmosphere concert gives an opportunity for our members that play the organ to entertain other members with their favorite selections on the Wurlitzer. The doors open at 2:00 p.m., with the concert starting at 3:00 p.m.. Come out and support other fellow members as they take a seat at our Mighty Wurlitzer!



photo: Lance Luce

Your New Executive Board ... Connie Masserant

I would like to introduce you to your new Executive Board for the Society. As most of you are probably aware, once the board elections are completed, the Board's first duty is to elect its officers. So allow me to introduce you to from left to right Lance Luce, Vice-president, Connie Masserant, President, Dick Dengate, Treasurer, and in the back, Dave Calendine, Secretary . Please feel free to reach out to us or any of the other Directors if you have questions, comments, suggestions, or want to volunteer. We are just a phone call away or an email away.



From left to right: Lance Luce, Vice President; Connie Masserant, President; Dave Calendine, Corporate Secretary; Richard Dengate, Treasurer

50th Anniversary Celebration A Success ... Connie Masserant



The marquee announces Lance Luce's concerts for the 50th anniversary



The tables are set for the 50th anniversary catered meal



Food for the catered meal is prepared at the counter



The catered meal was enjoyed by everyone that attended

The week end celebration was quite the success. Friday night began with a meeting of all the volunteers to receive their post assignments for an unexpected amount of movie guests. With radio, internet, and flyer advertising, we weren't sure whether to expect 600 or 60 guests for the silent movies, so we were prepared for a full house if it happened. With the volunteers in place, we

threw open the doors to receive over 200 guests. The crowd came from all over the city and many from our Hispanic neighborhood. It was nice to see so many of our members approach the new guests, several of whom had never been to the theater or who had been there as a young child. The stories we heard from them were fabulous. As show time drew close, our own Lance Luce took the opportunity to start the show with his exciting Hispanic number, "España Cani," which grabbed everyone's attention and kept it right to the end of the show. Lance accompanied three silent movies, Laurel and Hardy's "Liberty", Buster Keaton's "Cops", and Chaplin's "The Rink." He took time between movies to educate the audience about our Wurlitzer and demonstrated the many sounds it may produce for silent movie accompaniments.

The audience, when asked if they would like to see more movies or "Do this Again?" responded with an overwhelming response of clapping and shouting to signify "YES!" This has encouraged the board to look

into having a movie day/night once a month.

At the end of the evening, volunteers stayed to sweep up popcorn, clean the auditorium and lobby for Saturday's events. After the tables and chairs had been set up in the concession room for Saturday's catered dinner, all went home, happy with our successes for the night.

Saturday morning started with getting the linens and place settings on the tables for the evening dinner. Beautiful pottery vases decorated with a picture of our console and text commemorating our 50th adorned with yellow flowers made for beautiful centerpieces for the tables. Thank you Glenn Rank for making those vases and filling them with flowers. I know many happy members left with them in their hands.

With last minute touch-ups around the theater and preparations complete, we were ready at 12:00 p.m. to open the doors for the guests who were coming to enjoy the afternoon activities.

By 1:00 p.m. we started our first of three presentations by John Lauter. John gave us a brief history on our Wurlitzer and some of the artists who played it when it was still installed at the Fisher Theatre.

John was proceeded by Stephen Warner who gave a slide show starting with the history of the Wurlitzer company. Technical aspects of the organ were presented and accompanied by several photos and drawings depicting those aspects. Everyone walked away happy, knowing

a little more about our Wurlitzer.

The audience was fascinated with the rare opportunity to view the inside of the percussion chambers that set up high on the theater walls. With Lance Luce at the console and Stephen and John with the camera in the chambers, Lance discussed and demonstrated the different instruments so that they could be viewed as he played. A brief explanation was given on the color coding and the lay out of the stop tabs on the console.

All of the presentations proved to be exciting and very informative. Thank you, gentlemen, for contributing your expertise and time.

The afternoon's activities wrapped up with a round table of one charter member, George Orbits, and two long-time members, Ken Holden and Glenn Rank. Each shared the history of the moves from the Fisher Theatre, in and out of the Iris Theatre, and finally into the Senate Theater. Much history and several enjoyable stories were told by all. The audience even had an opportunity to ask the panel some questions.

As the afternoon's activities came to a close, those who had dinner tickets were able to partake in a little social time with refreshments and conversation in the inner lobby. This gave everyone an opportunity to look through old photo albums (donated by Marvin Spears) of many work sessions and events that occurred over the years. There were also several displays of

50th Anniversary ... continued

old newspaper clippings, photos, and copies of newsletters and programs from the past fifty years.

The concession area was filled with linen-covered tables and chairs awaiting the crowd to burst through the doors for a beautiful catered dinner.

By five o'clock, everyone was seated at a table enjoying dinner and catching up on old times with old friends. The room was a buzz with conversation.

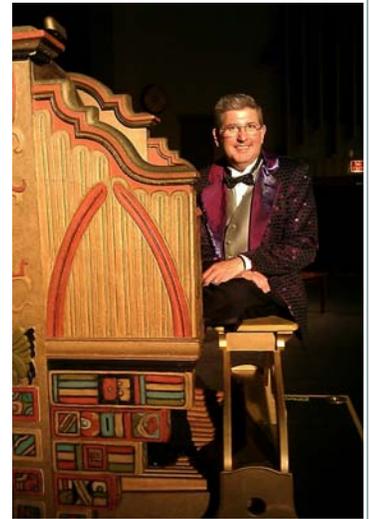
Soon, it was time to move on to the closing event of the day. And what could be

more appropriate than a concert given by Lance Luce, a long-time member and an artist who grew up playing our Wurlitzer and has continued for forty years.

Opening with, "On A Wonderful Day Like Today," he dazzled us with musical memories throughout the last fifty years. Using a wide range of registrations and styles, Lance entertained us with numbers such as St. Louis Blues, Secret Love, an Oliver Medley, The Lady is a Tramp, Boogie Woogie, and a Beatles Medley. He earned an extra long applause for

his Spanish medley, Espana Cani-La Cumparista which exhibited his fancy pedal work.

While listening to the second half of the concert, the audience was presented with a wonderful slide show of pictures of all the organists who had played the theater over the past years. Interspersed, were shots taken from different renovation work sessions. This presentation was a beautiful review of a portion of our society's history. What better way to end the event!



Renovation Update ... Connie Masserant

Some of you may have noticed that when you came in the front entrance of the Senate that she had a freshly painted front. Yes, the graffiti is gone and she looks pretty once again. This was the handy work of Nicholas Grunas and Connie Masserant. And I might say it still looks good after a month. I believe that this is a sign that the times are changing.

We will be replacing one of the necessary side exit doors. This is going to cost us about \$2,100. As you know we depend on donations from our membership and others. Any amount that anyone may contribute will certainly help keep our club open. You may donate on our web site www.dtos.org or drop a check in the mail to DTOS 6424 Michigan Avenue Detroit, MI. 48210. Thank You in advance for anything you can do.



This is the main entrance before work was completed.



This is the finished work on the main entrance.



Bass Drum—The Rest of the Story ... Scott Smith

Those of us who care for the Fisher Wurlitzer were pleased to read our editor's review of the reinstallation of the organ's bass drum and action, but there is much more to the story.

A while back, a water leak in the Left Percussion Chamber made itself known. Wanting to protect the organ components installed up there, Steve Warner, on a routine check of things, quickly covered what he could with the dropcloths at hand. Aside from some leather gaskets in the marimba, the only real damage was one of the bass drum heads. Luckily, the actions for the bass drum and kettle drum effects had been removed only a very short time prior to be restored, and they were completely unharmed. The bass drum head was still original to the organ's installation into the Fisher, and we were sorry to see it go, as it was still basically in good shape. At some point, someone had turned the head slightly to create a new "wear spot" and extend its life; presumably after being installed into the Iris or Senate theatres.

In the meantime, the bass and kettle drum actions were restored in my shop and returned to the theatre, but what to do about the heads? One of our more prominent members quickly stepped up and generously offered to buy new ones. This would have been a perfect solution and the story would have ended right there, except for the fact that I know from past experience that the new heads don't exactly work on the old drums. The problem is the hoop or "flesh ring" as

we learned its name from trades people. The old rings are a relatively thin piece of rectangular steel, to which the skin (and I do mean skin) is attached. The new ones are a much thicker and rounder ring of aluminum. The old hardware doesn't exactly find its way comfortably around those rings, and therein lies the problem. As always, when I'm stumped on a problem and my local sources come up short, I call my old friend and colleague, Carlton Smith in Indianapolis; someone we all look up to. Carlton was quick to offer detailed information about a business he worked with to restore those old rings with new natural skins, which is exactly what I wanted. While I may personally prefer the newer plastic heads, as they don't change with the weather and they tend to be louder, the way we approach the traps and percussions on the Fisher organ is the way we approach the rest of the instrument. It's called restoration, not replacement for good reason. So, I began my journey. I called what I found to be a music store over in Wisconsin, left a message, and the next day, the call was returned. The man proved to be quite helpful, and politely referred me to their source, which turned out to be a tannery. This turned out to be not just any tannery, but a rather special one. Back in the day, you couldn't swing a dead cat without hitting a tannery that restored drum heads, but no more. It turns out that this particular tannery is the only one remaining in the entire country that still

performs that sort of work. So, I called, and again left a message. Hours later, a rather cautious voice asked what I was doing and how I got their number. I answered honestly, saying we were pipe organ restorers and wanted these heads replaced. I was then instructed to pack them up and ship them to an address in Milwaukee along with a deposit, which I did. Many months passed, with no word on the heads. I feared I would have to find another Wurlitzer bass drum with intact heads if the others didn't make it back home. Finally, the call was received that the heads were done. The owner of the tannery wanted to ship them, but I offered to pick them up when I would be on business in Wisconsin in a few weeks. I was concerned about something happening to the heads in transit, which would start the whole process up again, plus my curiosity was piqued about this place.

Upon arriving in Milwaukee, I drove immediately to the tannery. My GPS device took me to a row of odd, one-story industrial buildings on the city's North side. The oddest building on the street, painted red, white and blue looked as if it had been attacked by a drunken bunch of patriotic hippies, and left that way for the last forty years. I parked and went to the front door, to which was attached a rather small sign directing me to the back door. Back I went, rang the buzzer, whereupon the garage door halfway between opened and I was asked to identify myself and state my business. For a

fleeting moment, I thought that somehow, my GPS has failed me and I had gone to an obscure entrance to Fort Knox. As soon as I pulled out my papers and identified the boss by name, I was told to wait just inside the door while they summoned him. Despite the obvious use of a high-volume air-handling system, the stench inside the building can only be described as a cross between rotting fish and the worst wet dog odor you've ever inhaled. I stood as close to the outside as possible in the chilly air. Finally, after waiting for what seemed to be several minutes, the boss arrived with the drum heads, neatly wrapped and packed for shipping, and we conducted our business. He commented on the age of the flesh rings. To my amazement, when he asked what the drum was used for and I informed him, he freely admitted that he was completely unaware of theatre organs, what they did, and how we use them today. I immediately directed him to Organ Piper Pizza, an iconic Milwaukee restaurant with a fine-sounding theatre organ that has played daily for many, many years. He was completely unaware, but promised to go that night with his family. As I walked away, I wasn't sure if I was more amused, shocked, offended or perplexed that he didn't know. After all, they do a good deal of business with band organ owners and restorers, but I know from personal experience that when you're in the fog of running your own business, some of the most obvious things can pass you right by.

Bass Drum ... continued

A short time later, the heads were delivered to the theatre, and as accurately reported last month, other priorities took precedence. I can tell you that when we opened the package for the first time, we were stunned at the appearance of the new heads. They looked exactly like the old ones, right down

to the yellowish tint. A perfect restoration. While it took some time to get them back on the drum and up in place, in the long run, it was the right thing to do. I'm told that getting the heads back on was something to behold, and we should have considered selling tickets. Initially, Steve Warner at-

tempted it solo and reported to me that it kicked him in the tokus after a lengthy bout. He reluctantly threw in the towel. I'm sure there was a score on the back page of the sports section that day which read: Heads 1, Warner 0. Ultimately, he had to call for backup. Jeff Slabaugh came to the rescue

and together, they got the heads on and the action re-mounted. Everything works just as it ought to. Yay, team!

And that, my friends, as a famous entertainment broadcaster used to say, is the rest of the story!

Membership Report ... Lance Luce

As of a couple of weeks ago all of the current members, associate and playing, should now have their paper wallet-sized membership cards. These membership cards let you easily identify yourself when entering the

theater for concerts. If for some reason you do not have your membership card, please email Lance Luce at lanceluce@wowway.com or call him at 248-321-3596 and he will be glad to take care of getting you your card.

Just inside the side door of the theater you will find a rack of name tags. We ask that you wear your name tag while at the theater so we can get to know you. Please put it back on the rack when leaving, so that it will be

there waiting for you for the next event! Don't forget that you can bring three guests with you to each concert, so spread the fun, and bring some friends!

Fifty Years of Growth and Music ... George Orbits

After the music, cheers and applause have faded away, the members of the DTOS can step back and enjoy their accomplishments and success of fifty years of theater organ music in their own building. The past year has seen an outstanding contribution of time and effort in refurbishing the Senate Theater prior to this month's anniversary celebra-

tion.

The work and fun that prevails every week or so has led to a facility that is the talk of the organ world. Of course, no project is ever completely done. All areas of our building and installation require continued attention and upgrading. We are nothing without our members and supporters.

The contribution of your

time and effort would add to the hours necessary to further the operation and elegance of the Senate. I'm sure there's a task that you're capable of. We are often the beneficiary of the bold sounds of the Wurlitzer organ during our work sessions. This creates inspiration and makes it all worthwhile. You may call Connie Masserant at (734) 652-6004

or e-mail her at cmasserant13@gmail.com to inquire about our next work schedule.

My thanks again to all of our members and supporters who have contributed unselfishly, in the many, many ways, to the success and longevity of the DTOS. We'll look forward to another 50 years of success.

Annual Summer Picnic ... Glenn Rank

Once again we will be having our Summer Picnic at the home of Glenn Rank and David Voydanoff. The date is Sunday, August 19, 2012. The format will be the same as in the past. The hosts will provide Sloppy Joes and Hot dogs, and you will bring a dish to share with the group. Glenn will be sending out a reminder in

late July / early August. You are asked to call and reserve, and to find out what is needed to compliment the menu.

The 3/10 Wurlitzer will be waiting for you, so bring some favorite music to play on this fun little organ!



From the President's Desk ... Connie Masserant

Well, the big event is over and in case you missed it, I have written a summary of the weekend's events in this Newsletter. Therefore, I will say no more except I would like to take this space to thank everyone who help make it possible. A lot of planning and hard work went into our celebration, but it was one of love.

Thank you to all of the Directors and members who

pitched in to take care of the many tasks at hand, both at the movie night and during Saturday's events.

Now that the celebration is behind us, we look forward to many things – back to renovating, finding members to serve on any of the numerous committees, gaining more volunteers to help out with more upcoming events, planning movie day/night once a month, sup-

porting rentals, and much more. All of this takes volunteers. There are all levels of volunteer work that needs to be done. There are jobs for people who range from 18 to 80 years old, so don't think you are too young or too old to help out. It takes all of us which is why they call it "membership". So reach out to me or any of the other Board members to volunteer your services. I am

happy to say that I just recently have been able to add two more people to our "active" volunteer list. My contact information is on the front page, or you can go to our website at www.dtos.org, or call the theater and leave a message.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Connie Masserant,
President
Cell: 734-652-6004

Board Endorses By-Law Amendment ... Richard Dengate

At the June meeting of the DTOS Board of Directors the board voted to transmit to the playing members a proposal to amend the By-Laws with a recommendation to approve. This

change would align our governance year – annual membership meeting and election, with our fiscal year.

Currently the annual membership and election of directors do not take place

until four months into the fiscal year. Both our financial and governance matters should begin and end at the same time. This amendment would accomplish the alignment. Each playing member

is entitled to vote. You may vote in person at the September concert. If you are unable to attend the concert voting will be conducted by registered mail. Please make sure you vote.

Meet in the Middle ... Grand Ledge Opera House Sunday, August 5, 2012 1:30p.m.

"MEET IN THE MIDDLE"
THE AUGUST ORGAN EVENT!
The Multi-Club Meet!
Sunday, August 5, 2012 1:30 P.M.

Grand Ledge Opera House
121 S. Bridge St. (M-100) @ River St.
Grand Ledge (just West of Lansing), Michigan

Lunch, Concert & Open Console!
Tony O'Brien, Organist

Cost: \$25 per person
Buffet luncheon
Please pre-pay and reserve by July 22

All theatre organ clubs, committees and museums within a two-hour drive of Lansing are invited to attend this now-annual event! See old friends, meet new ones!

Have a meal, hear a mini-concert and enjoy open console at the 3/20 Barton organ!

Send checks or money orders to:
Lansing Theatre Organ, Inc.
P. O. Box 26154
Lansing, MI 48909

Questions?
Email: LTOPOPS@AOL.COM



Open Console at the Fox Theatre ... Dave Calendine

For the first time in many years, the Fox Theatre in downtown Detroit is letting the doors open to the Fox for an open-console time at the Mighty Wurlitzer on Saturday, August 25th, 2012. The doors will open at 2:30 p.m.

Our Corporate Secretary, Dave Calendine works at the Fox Theatre, and has worked out details with the theatre management to make this special event happen. There are some rules with must be followed, and the event is limited to the first 150 people to sign up and attend. The event will last for two hours. Here are the details in how this special event will work.

Those that will be attending will need to sign up for the event (directions later in this article). On the day of the event, those attending may park in the Fox Parking

Garage next to the Fox Theatre (behind Hockeytown Café). A discounted rate of parking has been arranged to be offered for this event.

Entrance to the event will be through the Fox Receiving entrance, just to the right of the marquee (look for the sign above the entrance). Once in, you will need to stop by the security desk to check-in. After that, you will enter the theatre. The main floor and balcony will be opened. Please note that the lobby organ is not a part of this event and will not be able to be played.

The Fox is letting the theatre be available for two hours. Open console time will be limited, and the process will be stated to everyone before the day of the open console.

As part of the event, the staff organists, if available, will also perform a selection

or two so that you can hear the organ at its best.

It is hoped that open console events at the Fox will happen more often if everything goes well with this first one. Please help make this a successful event so that this can happen again in the future!

Here are the details for signing up to attend:

Send an e-mail to Dave Calendine (contact information on the first page) containing the following information:

- Your name
- Your phone number
- Number that will be attending
- Which organ club(s) you are a member of
- Do you wish to play the organ?

After your information is received, you will get a reply mail sent to you from Dave letting you know that you

are signed up to attend.

Further information regarding this event will be sent to those that signed up to attend.

If you would like, Preservation Detroit (formerly Preservation Wayne) is doing their annual theatre tours in downtown Detroit the same day as the open console. Tours go through the Fox, Fillmore, Michigan, Opera House, Gem, Century and Music Hall theatres. Lunch is included in the cost of the tour. Further information on the tours can be obtained by going to www.preservationdetroit.org.

Please note, there was a change to the date due to a show schedule, but the show has been rescheduled so the Preservation Detroit and open console date is now back to Saturday, August, 25th. I apologize for any confusion resulting from this.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE REDFORD THEATRE

July 13 & 14—The Wizard of Oz

July 20 & 21—Cool Hand Luke

August 10 & 11—Abbott & Costello Double Feature

August 24 & 25—North by Northwest

September 7 & 8—What's Up Doc?

September 21 & 22—The Sea Hawk

September 28 & 29—Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds"

October 5 & 6—Three Stooges Festival

All of these great films are shown Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:00 p.m. as well as Saturday afternoon at 2:00 p.m. (unless otherwise noted)

Organ overtures start thirty minutes prior to each show time.

Sit back and enjoy the movies under the Redford's star-lit sky!

Visit the Redford Theatre on the web at www.redfordtheatre.com

DETROIT THEATER
ORGAN SOCIETY

Over 50 Years of Entertainment!

Detroit Theater Organ Society

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Detroit, MI 48210-2957

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Concert Hotline: (313) 894-4100

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.DTOS.ORG

Remaining 2012 Concert Series

September 16—Pierre Fracalanza

October 21—Steven Warner

November 18—Melissa Ambrose-Eidson

December 2—Fr. Andrew Rogers

All concerts are held at the Senate Theatre,
6424 Michigan Ave., Detroit MI 48210-2957

Doors open at 2:00 p.m., concerts start at 3:00 p.m.

