

DETROIT THEATER ORGAN SOCIETY

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Simon Gledhill Returns to Senate

Sunday, March 26, 2017

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The 2017 concert season gets off to a great start with internationally-renowned theatre organist Simon Gledhill.

Simon was born in Halifax, UK and showed a keen interest in music from an early age.

He began learning to play the piano accordion at age six and continued with that instrument for eleven years, winning several competitions along the way.

When he was ten, his parents purchased a small electronic organ. After initially teaching himself to play it, he commenced formal studies with a local teacher, Michael Woodhead, who gave him extensive tuition in classical organ and piano.

Simon's first experience of the theatre pipe organ was hearing the late Ernest Broadbent play the "Mighty Wurlitzer" at Blackpool's Tower Ballroom. He subsequently discovered that a local, privately-owned instrument could be hired out by the hour, and began making weekly practice visits. In 1982 he entered and won the Northern Young Theatre Organist of the Year competition. Nigel Ogden, presenter of BBC Radio 2's *The Organist Entertains*, was in



the audience, and invited him to make some recordings for the programme on the BBC theatre organ at the Playhouse Studio in Manchester.

The broadcasts resulted in a flurry of concert offers, and Simon has since performed at all the major theatre organ venues in Britain, as well as touring in Germany, Holland, Australia, New Zealand and the USA. There have been numerous appearances at Annual and Regional Conventions of the American Theatre Organ Society, and Simon was honoured to accept the ATOS Organist of the Year award at the Society's 1997 Annual Convention.

Simon's music has won high praise from his peers. Lyn Larsen said: 'He is that rare combination of flawless

technique, impeccable phrasing and an unerring sense of musical good taste.' And Nigel Ogden added: 'Here is someone who was born to be a theatre organist. His ability has earned him the genuine admiration of both audiences and colleagues alike.'

He combines his concert and recording activities with work for the Cinema Organ Society, the UK's leading theatre organ preservation group, and a full-time career in corporate banking, based in London.

Join us as we start another great year of concerts at the Senate. You won't be disappointed!

Doors to the theatre open at 2:00 p.m. Concert starts at 3:00 p.m.

We look forward to seeing you at the Senate!

D TOS Runs in the Black for 2016

For the first time in probably more than two decades the Detroit Theater Organ Society turned a small profit in the year of 2016!

For way too long the society has been running in the red and it just came the norm that every year we would lose money. It doesn't take a financial advisor or a money expert to figure out that that type of business plan isn't going to work for the long run. Opening up the theater to

outside rentals and also generating some cash flow from showing movies has made the difference this past year. Michael Fisher and a small core group of volunteers worked tirelessly to book and organize rental functions during the year. Our membership dues, which haven't been raised in many, many years, cover the costs of the Organist fees for concerts but that's about it. Other costs such as utilities and other operating

expenses have to be offset somehow. We also received many generous donations this past year which helped considerably towards different projects. We are raising money for a new, brighter projector for the projection booth as well as the long-term goal of fixing our Marquee. Adding the rentals in movies into our business model is key to generating the income that we need to keep the Senate theater open so we all can enjoy our

beautiful Wurlitzer into the future. We do need more volunteers to help out since we now have more events to cover. If you're an able-bodied member and would like to help out at some of these rental events or movie showings feel free to contact one of us on the board. We would be glad to accept your assistance. Let's keep this momentum going for 2017. Thank you for everything you've done to help support our society.

Lance Luce
President, DTOS



J Justin LaVoie Performing in Lansing

Scott Smith
President, Lansing Theatre Organ

Twenty-year old Justin LaVoie possesses a steadfast dedication to the theatre organ art form. After hearing a theatre organ recording at the age of six, this Detroit-area native was instantly captivated by the instrument's distinctive sound. Beginning in 2008, Justin attended several Summer Youth Adventures, conducted by the American Theatre Organ Society, deepening his knowledge of both the musical and mechanical aspects of the pipe organ. In recognition of his diligence as an organ student, he was named ATOS Student of the Year in 2010, after which he began a period of study with acclaimed theatre organist Jelani Eddington. At the 2013 ATOS National Convention in Atlanta, Justin won the ATOS Young Theatre Organist Competition, achieving the prestigious title of

Overall Winner. He currently studies at the University of Oklahoma, pursuing a Bachelor of Music Arts Degree. Away from the console, he enjoys cooking, poetry, spending time outdoors, listening to a wide variety of music, maintaining his extensive collection of early 20th century box cameras, and restoring his personal Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ, which was originally installed in the Punch & Judy Theatre in Grosse Pointe.

The Grand Ledge Opera House was built in 1884 as the Riverside Rink, one of the state's first dedicated roller skating rinks, at a time when the area literally bubbled with hot mineral springs, and was very popular with tourists. Over the next century or so, it was home to an opera house, numerous sporting events (when the local schools had no

gymnasiums), a military encampment in times of war, religious tent-style meetings, and beginning in 1929, spent the next forty-plus years as a furniture store. After enjoying a brief time as the region's bicentennial headquarters in 1976, it sat as storage until becoming a vernacular building once again, re-opening in 1994 following an extensive restoration and renovation. Today, it hosts numerous activities on a regular basis, including receptions, parties, meetings, exercise classes and musical events.

The core of the 3/20 Barton hybrid organ in the Opera House was from the Michigan Theatre in downtown Lansing. Following a ten-year search, volunteers from Lansing Theatre Organ spent four intensive years on-site, restoring and expanding the instrument. It

has played since December, 1994 with three public concerts and films each year, all featuring the world's finest theatre organists. In addition, the organ is available for private events.

Tickets: \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door day of performance.

Tickets available in the office of the Grand Ledge Opera House during normal business hours. VISA/Mastercard accepted. No credit cards accepted on concert days. Doors open one hour prior to performance.

Grand Ledge Opera House
121 S. Bridge St. @ River St.
Grand Ledge, MI 48837

517-627-1443 Grand Ledge
Opera House

517-882-5115 LTO Office

Construction Continues at the Senate

Christopher Dengate
DTOS Board of Directors

Just because there are not any organ concerts scheduled for January or February does not mean some of the volunteers are on vacation for two months. Volunteers use this opportunity to continue to enhance and make improvements to the theater.

Work continues on the new sound area in the back of the theater. A new 100 square foot platform is being constructed in

the last row of the auditorium with a new opening being created from the hallway. With the recent rentals, we have had some interest in live bands, plays and shows needing more area for their soundboards and equipment. This area will also support our goal to enhance the surround sound for the movies that are being shown on the big screen and the equipment that is needed for that. Two new

cables are being run between the stage and this new area as well to provide a “plug and play” type of atmosphere.

To create this new sound area, approximately twenty seats were removed to build a platform area. These seats were not just thrown away. Volunteers walked the auditorium looking for seats elsewhere that looked in very bad shape and needed to be replaced. The damaged seats

have been swapped out with some of the seats that were removed to create the platform.

While there are still seats in the auditorium that are showing their age, if you are at an event and see one that needs replacement, please bring it to the attention of a board member who can make note of it and tag it.



Concert Day Reminders

Dave Calendine
Treasurer, DTOS

It has been some time since we have gone over some basic rules for the Detroit Theater Organ Society.

When there is an organ concert scheduled at the Senate, please note that the theatre and organ is restricted from use for two days prior to the concert, and is not available until the day after the scheduled concert. This will enable the artist to set the console and pistons, as well as rehearse. It also gives time for the organ maintenance staff to do any work on the organ for

the concert.

On days of the concert, the doors will open *one hour* prior to the concert. If you arrive before that, you will not be permitted into the theater. Final tuning of the organ is being done, and we need to respect the organ maintenance staff while the work is being done.

Once the doors do open, please make sure that you still get a ticket. *Do not pass by the ticket desk.* Everyone entering the theater needs a ticket. This includes all members.

Video recording of any part of the concert (including using your cell phone) is strictly prohibited. Playing Members that wish to (audio) record the concert may do so using the recording row at the rear of the auditorium. Playing members may also choose to purchase a CD recording of the concert, which is usually available several minutes after the conclusion of the concert. These CDs may be purchased at the music counter before the show and during intermission. All recordings are

for personal use only.

To help with the operation of the concession stand, it has been requested that if you have not signed up to work, or have not been contacted to work, that you refrain from going behind the concession stand. (If you would like to help work the concession stand, please let us know so that you can be added to the list of volunteers!)

We hope these reminders help, and we look forward to seeing you at the Senate Theater for our exciting concerts.

DETROIT THEATER
ORGAN SOCIETY

Over 50 Years of Entertainment!

Detroit Theater Organ Society

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.DTOS.ORG

2017 Concert Series

March 26—Simon Gledhill

April 23—Dennis James

May 21—Fr. Andrew Rogers

June 11—Donna Parker

September 9—Clark Wilson

October 15—Justin LaVoie

November 12—Dave Wickerham

December 3—Mark Herman & Anthony Snitker



photo: Lance Luce