



# Detroit Theater Organ Society

May 2012 Newsletter

Volume 51, Issue 5

## RON RHODE RETURNS TO THE SENATE

Senate Theater  
Sunday, May 20, 2012 3:00 p.m.

As the Detroit Theatre Organ Society prepares to celebrate its 50th anniversary, this month's artists is also celebrating another anniversary of sorts. In May of 2012, Ron Rhode begins the 44th year as a professional theatre organist. His recordings have received "Top Rating 10/10" from CD Review Magazine, and he was awarded "Theatre Organist Of The Year - 1989" by the American Theatre Organ Society. He has had the privilege of playing throughout the United States, Canada, England, and Australia on nearly all of the major theatre organ installations.

Ron is a native of Illinois, where he began his musical career on the piano. He quickly advanced to classical pipe organ, and in 1968 held his first theatre organ job playing for roller skating. In 1973 Ron moved to Phoenix, Arizona, to start a long association with the Organ Stop Pizza restaurants. In 1975 Ron moved to Mesa, Arizona, where he held the Fea-



tured Organist post and played for pizza patrons until November, 1986. In July, 1988, Ron again joined the staff as Associate Organist until his retirement in 2000. In Phoenix, he has been the Featured Organist for the Orpheum Theatre Silent Sunday Series, a silent movie series, since its inception in May 1999.

Since leaving the pizza parlor on a regular basis, Ron has completed a Bachelor of Education degree in Early Childhood Education at Arizona State University, and in 1995 he earned a Master of Elementary Education degree from Northern Arizona State University. In November 2011, Ron retired from Mesa Public Schools. He enjoyed a short retirement of seven weeks before accepting a job with Veritas Preparatory Academy, in Phoenix, as an 8th grade instructor of Music Theory and Recorder Ensemble. In addition to teaching, recording, and concertizing, Ron has been organist for ten years for the Church of

## RON RHODE CONCERT ... continued from the first page

the Beatitudes, U.C.C., in Phoenix, AZ, and accompanist for Orpheus Male Chorus of Phoenix for the past seven years.

With all of the commitments in Phoenix, Ron still finds time to maintain an active concert and recording career. He continues to perform professionally when called. He is a favorite at American Theatre Or-

gan Society national and regional conventions. He has more than twenty-five recordings to his credit.

Please make your plans now to join us on Sunday, May 20th at 3:00 p.m. and come see why Ron's mastery of the theater pipe organ have had him playing for over 44 years!

## OUR NEW HOUSE, BUT NOT FOR LONG!

Lance Luce  
DTOS Board of Directors

George Orbits has been working for the DTOS and the DTOS for a long time. And, he is still doing it, 50 years later. As many of you know, we recently acquired the "next" house down the block on Gilbert Street, the street that runs along side the Senate theater. Our plan is to knock it down and expand our parking lot. In the past we have bought the first 3 houses, and had them leveled, put down crushed stone, and made our own parking lot! Now we have 4 lots, a 33% expansion in parking capacity! George has been "instrumental" in wading through the red tape at city hall to facilitate us buying this property.

There are many things to be done before just calling in the demolition crew. The electricity had to be shut off; that was the easy part. The electric lines are above ground on poles in this area. The water and the



natural gas are underground, that is a little bit more difficult. The utilities have been contacted and their crews will be out to "cap off" the lines. Because they have to dig, there is some sizable expense involved; it's not just turning a valve under a cap in the sidewalk.

Recently our "new house" was set ablaze, possibly in a celebration that we were helping "cleanse" the neighborhood of a derelict house that the neighbors are glad to have removed. We have had people ask us "when are you guys going to buy that one too..." Well, we did, and we will soon have a much bigger parking lot for you to park in.

The fence will need to be expanded and there are still more permits to contract and forms to sign. But George is "working on it". I'm glad George is on our team!

Thank you George!

# T HEATER RENOVATION UPDATE

Connie Masserant  
DTOS Board of Directors



If you think the auditorium seems brighter...it is! Look to your feet. We have a freshly painted floor. As you walk down the aisles and peer between the rows of seats, the crisp clean floor looks back at you. After eight gallons of paint and the labor of Dick Dengate, Paul Ovares, Connie Masserant, and our newest member, Nicholas Grunus, the floor is ready to receive its next audience just in time for our May concert. Thank you to the member who donated the paint and to the volunteers who made it possible.



Edge those chair legs ... push that roller!  
Paul Ovares & Dick Dengate at work in the auditorium



Our newest member already diving into the work (and hopefully not diving into the paint!) Nicholas Grunus helps paint around the chair legs before using the rollers to paint the floor—and probably wondering “What did I get myself into?!?”

# W URLITZER CONSOLE ENCLOSURE

Lance Luce  
DTOS Board of Directors

Work has finished on an enclosure to protect our historic, one-of-a-kind Wurlitzer. This “black box” was designed by David Masserant and George Orbits to cocoon the console, and keep it out of harms way when we have rentals and other people using the theater building for uses other than organ concerts. Many other venues around the United States and other countries have to share the stage with the theater organ. So building a “shed” or “dog house” for the organ console is not a new idea. Our organ console and piano are now on movable platforms or dollies, and can be wheeled to the extreme sides of the newly expanded stage. The wind supply to the console now has a quick disconnect thanks to Dave Masserant, and is totally air tight. Dave has made many modifications to the console box and stage design. Mr. Masserant has much experience in construction and building. This “foldable house” protects the Wurlitzer cable while the organ is out in concert position, and expands to surround the console while in hibernation. Dave, along with George Orbits, put their collective heads together and designed a custom enclosure that will work for both situations. The enclosure almost disappears while in concert mode. We are looking forward to more rentals of our theater. If you know of someone, or some organization that would like to rent our theater, have them email us at [info@dtos.com](mailto:info@dtos.com), Michael Fisher is our rental agent, and he will give them all the details!

# G O TO THE MOVIES—AT THE SENATE!

Connie Masserant  
DTOS Board of Directors

Get Ready ... Get Set ... GO ... to the MOVIES!  
On Friday, June 8th at 7:00pm we kick off the weekend events of our 50th anniversary celebration with “Silent Movie Night” at the Senate. We will be showing three silent movies, along with a Betty Boop cartoon.

- The movies chosen are:
- Playhouse – starring Buster Keaton
  - The Rink – starring Charlie Chaplin
  - Liberty – starring Laurel and Hardy

The organist accompanying the movies will be our own Lance Luce on the Mighty Wurlitzer.

This will be a night of fun you won’t want to miss. Tickets are \$8.00. Bring your family and friends for a night you won’t forget. Come early and park in

our secure parking lot on the east side of the theater. Doors open at 6:00 pm.

*Please note that this is a special event, and not part of the normal concert series. This special movie night is not covered by your Associate or Playing member dues.*



# LET THE LIGHTS SHINE AT THE SENATE!

Fred Bruflodt  
DTOS Board of Directors

Work has begun on the installation of additional lighting equipment at the Senate Theater. This "phase one" project will bring more light to the newly expanded stage and will include a new digital control system for these new lights as well as lighting fixtures that may be added in the future.

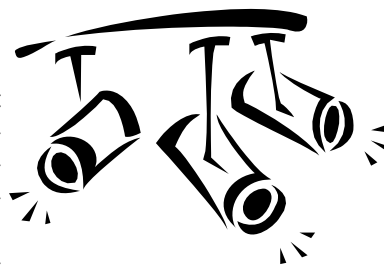
The Board approved a budget of approximately \$2,000 for the project with the hope that DTOS members and friends of DTOS would contribute to support this much-needed improvement. Additional contributions for lighting will be used for further expansion. Improving the lighting is necessary for future rentals to outside groups.

Volunteers will be installing a truss to hold the lighting instruments. The truss will be attached to the ceiling so that the lighting will shine down onto the

stage. The lighting experts that provided ideas about this project agreed that light coming from the ceiling would be better than coming from the back wall.

The new DMX digital control system will allow the control console to be placed wherever it is most convenient. It will not be limited to placement only in the projection booth. The system can be expanded to control additional lighting instruments, including the new, colorful LED lights recently installed in the four organ chambers.

Volunteers who can help with wiring and hanging the truss should contact Fred Bruflodt or Connie Masserant, or any Board Member. Both Associate Members and Playing Members are welcome to help on this project as well as any other project at the Senate Theater.



# DTOS ELECTION RESULTS

Dave Calendine  
DTOS Board of Directors

The last order of business at the Annual Meeting each year is the counting of the ballots that were turned in by the membership for the elections to the Board of Directors and to the Organ Trustee committee.

This year, there were over 90 ballots mailed out, with 65 returned and counted. There were seven positions on the Board of Directors up for election. The following individuals were elected to the Board: Fred Bruflodt, Gil Francis, Dick Leichtamer, Glenn Rank, Richard Dengate, Lance Luce and Bob Weil. Congratulations to each and every newly elected Board member!

For the position of Organ Trustee, David

Voydanoff was running unopposed.

We would like to thank Tom Iwankovitsch for his many years of service to the Detroit Theater Organ Society while on the Board of Directors.

At the following regular Board meeting, the following positions were filled for the coming year:

- President—Connie Masserant
- Vice President—Lance Luce
- Secretary—Dave Calendine
- Treasurer—Richard Dengate

We would also like to thank Dick Leichtamer and Bob Weil for their many years of dedication to the organization as President and Treasurer.

# RECORDING AT THE SENATE ... UPDATE

Fred Bruflodt  
DTOS Board of Directors

Full (playing) members have the privilege of recording most organ concerts on our Wurlitzer at the Senate Theater.

There are three ways to take home a concert recording. Members can connect their own recorder to the audio feed jacks in the back row (center and right sections only). In addition to the stereo audio feed, AC power is available. Audio connections are made with either RCA or 1/4" plugs. The feed works well with standard cassette machines, CD-R recorders, and the new miniature digital recorders. Just remember to obtain a suitable jumper cable to fit into your machine.

The signal being distributed is from the overhead stereo microphone pair and is the same as used for the DTOS archive digital recordings.

Playing members may choose to purchase a CD set of the concert. Place your orders at the record counter with Bob Weil. Using the DTOS' fast CD copier, members can obtain their discs after the program is finished. Or, you can pick them up at the next concert. See Bob for more details.

A third option is to use your own miniature, digital recorder with built-in microphones. Although the audio quality may not be quite as good as first two methods, you can sit anywhere, or sit in the back row. Although no microphone stands are permitted in the theater (except for official DTOS recordings), a member could use a microphone on a stand in the back row. Any stand should not interfere with enjoyment of the concert by other patrons.

DTOS members have this privilege through contractual agreements with each artist. Any recordings of DTOS concerts may not be duplicated, sold or offered to the general public or non-playing DTOS members. These private recordings are not meant to compete with the professionally produced CDs that an artist might offer for sale at our recording counter.

So, membership does have its privileges!

If you have questions about concert recording, contact Fred Bruflodt, recording committee chair, or any Board member.

# FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY SCHEDULE

Glenn Rank  
50th Anniversary Committee

Plans for activities on Saturday, June 9, 2012 have been firmed up, and we hope that you will join us for a fun-filled afternoon as we celebrate our Club's 50 years of providing fun and music.

1:00 P.M. Lance Luce.....Lance will be taking us on a tour of the sounds of our Wurlitzer. He will demonstrate the various features that are available on the instrument touching upon the Pizzicato Touch, Second Touch, use of Couplers etc. A mini-visual tour of the behind the scene's workings of the instrument will also be given, showing us some of the areas that are not available on our regular chamber tours. A sample

of the various types of pipe work that make up our organ, and the sounds that they produce will be also be presented.

2:15 P.M. John Lauter.....John will give us some insight into what makes our one-of-a-kind Fisher Wurlitzer so unique, and introduce us to the organists that played the instrument while it was installed in the Fisher Theater.

3:00 P.M. Round table discussion with some of the charter and old-time members who have been around for a long time with stories and more.

4:00 P.M. Light Hors d'oeuvres and wine will

# 50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS... *continued from the last page*

be served for those who have purchased tickets for the Buffet Dinner.

5:00 P.M. Buffet Dinner will be served for those who have reserved.

Menu: Country Baked Chicken  
Baked Lasagna (Some vegetarian will be available)  
Au Gratin Potatoes  
Long-Grain Wild Rice  
Green Beans Almondine  
Jello Salad  
Carrot Cake  
Beverage

7:00 P.M. Concert given by Lance Luce

For those who have not yet reserved for the dinner, tickets are still available. The cost for the dinner is \$14.00 per person. Please contact Glenn Rank at 810-794-3410 for dinner reservations. Reservations can also be made at the May 20th Ron Rhode Concert.

The concert portion is open to the public for \$12, but free to DTOS members and their guests.

Any questions, please contact

Glenn Rank – 810-794-3410  
Michael Fisher – 313-378-1275  
Connie Masserant – 734-652-6004

Happy   
Mother's Day

## **N**OTES FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Connie Masserant  
President, DTOS Board of Directors

I wish to take a moment to thank the Board for electing and entrusting me as your new President. I consider it a great honor and will strive to live up to the expectations of the position. As I have led us through the restoration process, I would next like to lead us to a more active and increased membership.

Since I can't do it alone, I would like to start from within and bring some of the general membership into the Board's working committees. My goal is to include at least one non-board member per committee. Therefore, the committee members will be reaching out to you, the membership, asking for support to the committee. So, when your phone rings or you receive

an email, please consider what you can do to contribute to your club. I look forward to being involved and working with each of the committees.

I would also like to bring back some of the social events that the club used to have in years gone by. We have a nice place to gather with secure parking, so it's time we all get to know each other a little better or rekindle old friendships.

In closing, I want to make it known that my door is always open for suggestions, questions, or for chat. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time. I look forward to another successful year for DTOS and a growing year. But, we must do it together.



photo: Lance Luce

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Look for us on Facebook!

2012 Concert Series

May 20—Ron Rhode

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION WEEKEND

June 8 & 9—See articles inside!

September 16—Pierre Fracalanza

October 21—Steven Warner

November 18—Melisa Ambrose-Eidson

December 2—Fr. Andrew Rogers