

# DETROIT THEATER ORGAN SOCIETY

Volume 55, Issue 4

May 2016



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## Martin Ellis Returns

Sunday, May 15, 2016

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

The Detroit Theater Organ Society is pleased to welcome back Martin Ellis to the Senate Theater stage.

Martin Ellis holds the distinction of being the first winner of the ATOS Young Organists Competition in 1986. After his initial exposure to theatre organ at the Paramount Music Palace in Indianapolis at seven years old, Ellis began organ studies in the sixth grade, and at fifteen began studies with John Ferguson. Upon winning the ATOS competition, he premiered with Rex Koury at the Chicago Theatre Wurlitzer that year, and was featured in concert at the ATOS National Convention the following year in Richmond, Va.

Ellis entered DePauw University in Greencastle, IN, majoring in keyboard performance and composition, which would prove to serve him well in future endeavors. The Central Indiana Chapter of ATOS was extremely supportive, engaging Martin in performances regionally throughout his college years. After winning the local AGO competition, he was the runner-up in the AGO Region V competition. During his senior year, he served as the weekend artist at Milwaukee's Piper Music Palace, as an alternate organist at the Pipes and Pizza in Lansing, Ill., and performed



concerts in and around the Chicago area.

Ellis accepted the prestigious position of Assistant Organist/Choirmaster at Second Presbyterian Church (Indiana's largest church) under Robert Shepfer, playing the 4/81 Aeolian-Skinner pipe organ from 1990-1998. Though established as a fine classical concert artist and church musician performing internationally at such places as Westminster Abbey in London, Ellis continued to be an active featured theatre organist for CIC-ATOS and on the Long Center Organ Series in Lafayette, Indiana.

With extraordinary sight-reading skills and the ability to

musically adapt to a variety of situations, Ellis was invited to be the fourth member of the Trio con Brio by Donna Parker, Jonas Nordwall and Tom Hazleton. He performed for the Dickinson Theatre Organ Society and Fort Wayne's Embassy Theatre when Tom was unable to perform, and was ready to step in and play any of the other member's parts as the understudy, definitely the toughest job of the three!

Ellis worked for Rodgers Instrument Corporation, spearheading the MIDI implementation with church music with Donna and Jonas. He moved to Portland, Oregon and continued his work with Rodgers, as well as serving as Music Direc-

# Martin Ellis ... continued from front page

tor/Organist at St. James Lutheran Church in downtown Portland. Theatre organ came into play again as he served as an associate organist at Uncle Milt's Pipe Organ Pizza in Vancouver, WA, and played for the local organ clubs.

Returning to Indianapolis, Martin became the Senior Staff Pianist/Organist for the Indianapolis Children's Choir—a touring organization with more than 2,000 children! Their tours have taken them through most major cities in Europe and Canada—including playing an organ

concert on the Tambourini organ at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. They have appeared on several major TV networks and ESPN. He became the staff arranger and orchestrator for the ICC organization and has many published choral and orchestra arrangements with Hal Leonard and Colla Voce publishing companies. He recently orchestrated fifteen pieces that were performed and recorded with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra and ICC. For seven years, Martin has concurrently served as Artistic Assistant/Pianist for the Pacific

Rim Children's Choir Festival in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Martin maintains an active concert schedule and has become a prominent face among the large church scene and orchestra scene in Indianapolis. He frequently is featured as a keyboard artist with a variety of venues including performances of the Saint-Saens Organ Symphony with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra and the Poulenc Organ Concerto with the Carmel Symphony Orchestra. He has appeared on the Ohio Theatre's summer movie series for several years.

In 2004, Martin was appointed the Associate Director of Music and Organist at North United Methodist Church in Indianapolis playing the restored 4/76 Kimball orchestral pipe organ. He also became the third permanent member of the Trio con Brio upon Tom Hazleton's passing—something Tom, Jonas and Donna agreed upon when the trio was formed.

Join us on Sunday afternoon, May 15 for an enjoyable afternoon of music at the Senate. We look forward to seeing you there.

## A Blast from the Past

I received a phone call from a friend of mine from work inquiring about the Senate Theater and the possibility of visiting there one day. I of course said absolutely. Any chance to show off the theater and the marvelous organ, I'm in. As it turns out, she grew up three blocks away and her first job was, in fact, at the Senate Coney Island next door. We arranged to meet on a Saturday, and I met this gentleman, Jim Watson, and his sister-in-law Joan Watson. (My friend's uncle and mother). I gave them a private tour of the theater and of course showed off the organ. As it turns out, Jim was the ticket taker during the late forties and early fifties here at the Senate Theater. He is pictured to the right at his old post.

He and Joan tell me that the Senate Theater was quite the hopping place during that

time. The day would begin by visiting the candy shop next door or to the "Better Made" potato chip outlet on the corner of Gilbert and Michigan. (Currently "Swans" income tax service). Joan got her first set of dishes from the theater as a promotional gimmick. The promotion was that for each visit you would receive one piece until you completed your set. Joan met her future husband, Jim's brother, at the theater as well. She and her brother Jim both told me that there was in fact a balcony at the theater at one time. There were three rows in what is now the ladies lounge. The rows looked through a single piece of glass that ran the entire length of the lounge and was a good place to take noisy children and babies.

They both had great stories about the Theaters past.

*Kevin Werner, DTOS Board of Directors*



# A n o t h e r S u c c e s s f u l R e n t a l

*Joan Brown, DTOS Board of Directors*

Monday morning, April 4th, hundreds of school aged children entered the doors of the Senate Theater to see a beautiful performance by the Hispanic Flamenco Ballet of Miami Beach Florida.

The renowned art and dance company consisting of just twelve talented adults is a non-profit organization which travels the United States doing an interactive show of Latin America and Spanish dance and music.

They are completely self-sufficient bringing with them every-

thing they need for their shows including sound, lighting, screen, small portable floor and costumes. Set-up and take down time took under an hour.

Two shows back-to-back were performed with new audiences arriving for each. The first was called 'Latin America Festival' and featured beautiful costumes, music and lighting. The second was called 'The Soul of Spain' and was more instrumental and diverse in its acts. For both shows certain students had been selected ahead of time

and, for the finale, were able to join the dancers on stage to learn some very creative moves, by that time most of the students in the audience were on their feet, some dancing in the aisles.

The following schools visited our beautiful and historic theater: Notre Dame Marist from Pontiac, Washington from Lucas County Ohio and Southfield and Livonia schools, with a total of ten buses. It was great to see the theater so lively and full of excited voices.



Visit our friends at the Redford Theatre for their classic film series.

May 20—Dead Poet's Society

May 21—Good Morning Vietnam

June 3 & 4—Rear Window

June 17 & 18—On Her Majesty's Secret Service

June 18—Pee Wee's Big Adventure

Full schedule of events, including times and prices, can be found on the web site

[WWW.REDFORDTHEATRE.COM](http://WWW.REDFORDTHEATRE.COM)

# Chocolate, Pitta, Wine, BBQ & Desserts!

Scott Smith

Fundraising & Marketing Committee

Those all sound good, don't they? But probably not all at the same event.

During the past few months our committee has met and is discussing some new and exciting possibilities for the raising of funds. Aside from music, food seems to be a common denominator, and so we'll be sure to have something available at every event. Here's a rundown of what we've been thinking:

**PIZZA NIGHT!** Music on the Mighty Wurlitzer, a sing-along, a short silent film...and pizza! We would establish a finite number of tickets to be sold, and partner with a local pizza establishment. If this proves successful, we'll do it as often as the crowd demands.

**SUMMER BARBEQUE!** Food cooked on the grille, great music on a great organ,

and lots of open console. What could be better for Summer fun?

**CHOCOLATE FEAST!** Perhaps around St. Valentine's Day or Sweetest Day, we would hold a chocolate-tasting event, while the romantic moods of the Mighty Wurlitzer would enhance the one being created by the sumptuous chocolate treats.

**KITCHEN EVENT!** Where a celebrity chef (or organist chef) would prepare a meal in the large and well-appointed kitchen of a certain large and historic home owned by a certain member of the club. Limited seating.

**GOLF OUTING!** Sponsorships, raffles and prizes. This type of fundraising takes place out in the world during the warm weather months. Given the number of club members

who play golf, we figure...why not?

**TIME-RELEASE RAFFLES!** You see these types of low-stress raffles taking place all over, where the draw date is down the road a few months

**MAJOR CONCERT!** Every year, a major organist would appear in a public event at the Senate that is not on the docket for the regular membership concert series.

**BATTLE OF THE ORGANISTS!** Several organists would "battle it out" during this zany event that offers laughs and music galore!

**WINE & CHEESE TASTING!** These events have long been synonymous with fundraising, but they never seem to get old.

**FABULOUS DESSERTS & GREAT COFFEES!** Symphony orchestras and other major

arts groups offer this type of event as an alternative to wine and cheese. Who could argue with a great cup o' joe with an outrageously rich dessert...or two...or three?

**GRANTS!** Grants of all types are available to organizations like ours. Some are not awarded simply because no one asks.

**GAME NIGHT!** Raffles, Name That Tune, and a host of other games would be played using the Wurlitzer in a number of ways.

**BREWER BASH!** We're thinking of ways to improve this now-annual fun-filled event. The 2016 event will take place in December. Date to be announced soon!

And that, my friends, is just the beginning! Stay tuned!

## Kroger Community Rewards Program

Kevin Werner, DTOS Board of Directors

Help DTOS & the Senate Theater by enrolling in the Kroger Community Rewards Program. Kroger will donate money to DTOS on a quarterly basis based on the percentage of your spending as it relates to the total spending of all participating Kroger Community Rewards organizations. There is at no cost to you. It is tied into your Kroger shopping card.

To use the Kroger Community Rewards program:

- Register online at [krogercommunityrewards.com](http://krogercommunityrewards.com)
- Be sure to have your Kroger Plus card handy.
- If you do not yet have a Kroger Plus card, they are

available at the customer service desk at any Kroger.

- Click on Sign In/Register
- If you are a new online customer, click on SIGN UP TODAY in the 'New Customer?' box.
- Sign up for a Kroger Rewards Account by entering zip code, clicking on favorite store, entering your email address and creating a password, agreeing to the terms and conditions
- You will then get a message to check your email inbox and click on the link within the body of the email.
- Click on "My Account" "Account Settings" and use your email address and password to proceed to the next step.
- Click on Edit Kroger Community Rewards information and input your Kroger Plus card number.
- Update or confirm your information.
- Enter Non-Profit Organization (NPO) number (91825) or name (Detroit Theater Organ Society), select organization from list and click on confirm.
- To verify you are enrolled correctly, you will see "Detroit Theater Organ Society" on the right side of your information page.
- Do you use your phone number at the register?

Call 877-576-7587 to get your Kroger Plus card number.

- For each purchase to count, you must swipe your registered Kroger Plus card or use the phone number that is related to your registered Kroger Plus card when shopping.

Please note: Current registrations expire 04/30/2016. Kroger Rewards starts again 05/01/2016. You will need to re-register at that time.

Thanks, on behalf of the Detroit Theater Organ Society and the Senate Theater!

If you need help registering please email: [info@dtos.org](mailto:info@dtos.org).

# The Sound of Improvement

Since the establishment of the Organization, a policy has been in place allowing the playing membership to bring in their own recording devices and record the concerts on their personal machines for their listening pleasure. The organization reserved the last row in the auditorium (commonly known as the recording row) for these members to connect their machines into the house system to record.

From the start of the Organization, it was a very popular thing to do. Many playing members would haul their reel to reel machines in which later turned into cassette tape decks and then to Compact Disc Recorders once a month to record the show. Many of

these recordings are still in their procession. It was not until the last 10 years or so that we have noticed the number of members recording the show dwindling down to just a handful. We now offer the playing members a CD of the concert for \$10 at the record counter for those that wish to purchase it.

Some changes are coming to the recording row during the summer. All of the old wiring that provided the members with the "feed" from the house system will be removed. In addition, the center section of the recording row will take on a new look with improvements to the area that the person running the mixer sits. A level platform will replace about 5-6 seats in the center of the center

recording row and all of the equipment needed for the PA system will be relocated from the projection booth. An opening in the wall behind the recording row will allow access to this new platform from the hallway outside the offices on the main floor.

With more movies being planned, new wiring will be run in the tunnel areas of the auditorium from the recording row to the stage area for new speakers suitable for movie presentation as well as the expansion of monitors on stage for live performances when needed.

A lot of this work will be done by volunteers and the parts of the plan that can't be done by them will be contracted out. Most of the visible

*Christopher Dengate*  
DTOS Board of Directors

work will not occur until after the 4th of July and we hope to have all the wiring in place between now and then. The completed project will be done by the September Concert.

As with any project with the organization, donations will be accepted for the purchase of the speakers and cost of labor by outside contractors. Please drop off any donations to the Theater during your next visit and write "Sound and Recording Fund Donation" in the Memo area of your check. As a reminder, all donations to the Organization are tax deductible because we are a 501c3 organization and a letter will be sent to you for your records.

# ATOS Pre-Glow in July

As many of you know, the ATOS (American Theatre Organ Society) holds its national convention every year around the fourth of July. Each year it moves to a different city, and features that city's theatre organs, as well as some other prominent organs. Last summer, for example, it was in Philadelphia and surrounding areas. They also included two big organs, one at the Wanamaker Department store (now Macy's) and the other at the Atlantic City Convention Center. This summer the convention is being held in the Cleveland, Ohio area. As a special optional addi-

tion, there is an "Overture" side trip to Detroit the day before the convention officially starts in Cleveland. This "pre-glow" day is Sunday, July 3rd and will offer convention goers a concert by Richards Hills at our very own Senate Theater Wurlitzer! Additionally, they will be bussed to hear Justin LaVoie at Stahls Automotive Museum in Chesterfield, Michigan.

Scott Smith and the organ crew are putting on a special effort to get our Wurlitzer in the best shape possible for this national exposure. They have been working very hard, and will continue to put in some extra

effort so that our organ can sound it's very best for this theater organ-loving crowd. We would like to thank Richard Baks and Allen Leonard for their generous donations that have allowed us to re-leather two of the four combination action machines. In a previous Newsletter I mentioned that we have four devices in the relay room that need re-leathering and they would cost approximately \$2,000 each to be completed. Thanks to the donations the first one was completed between the March and April concert, and the next one is being worked on right now, and will

be done by the May concert.

We still have two more to go! If you'd like to help us put our best foot forward for the ATOS audience in July, now would be a GREAT time to make a donation to your favorite organ society! As more and more organs go to digital relays, ours is still running on the air-driven system that it came out of the factory with in 1928. Pretty impressive! Again, thank you to those of you who have made donations to keep our Wurlitzer playing, and thanks in advance for your continued support!

*Lance Luce*

*President, Detroit Theater Organ Society*

DETROIT THEATER  
ORGAN SOCIETY

*Over 50 Years of Entertainment!*

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

[WWW.DTOS.ORG](http://WWW.DTOS.ORG)

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## **2016 Concert Series**

May 15—Martin Ellis

June 26—Jonas Nordwall

September 18—Dave Calendine

October 16—Pierre Fracalanza

November 20—Justin Stahl

December 4—Lance Luce



photo: Lance Luce