

# DETROIT THEATER ORGAN SOCIETY

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

Senate Theater • 6424 Michigan Avenue • Detroit, MI 48210

Phone (313) 894-0850 •

[WWW.DTOS.org](http://WWW.DTOS.org) *Volume 58 issue 4,*  
December 2019

## What's New?

### **Holiday Concert Dec 8! at 3 pm doors open at 2** (By Kevin Werner)

Join us for our annual Holiday concert featuring the incredible and the 2019 ATOS artist of the year Pierre Fracalanza.

Pierre began playing piano and organ at the age of three. By age eight he was already playing in churches and by the age of sixteen was a church organist and music director. He attended the renowned Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. With his love for entertaining he spent the first half of his career as a professional entertainer in the Greater Detroit Area's most exclusive clubs and restaurants. And it was during this time that he also tried his hand at the theatre organ as a staff organist for the Theatre Organ Pizza and Pipes in Pontiac, Michigan. He returned to the 88's as a pianist and vocalist when the theatre organ and pizza parlor idiom waned in the Detroit area. It was, in fact, his interest in augmenting his piano and vocal concerts that re-introduced him to the possibility of concertizing on the theatre organ. He had intended to use a virtual theatre organ as part of his concert routine (projecting the moving organ keys onscreen in

duet with the piano). Little did he know he would become a beta tester for the Paramount Organ Works series of virtual theatre organs. After numerous audio recordings and YouTube videos, he is in high demand for concert theatre organ work. Among his many accomplishments are opening for Carol Channing at the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts. He has also played for the late Senator Edward Kennedy, First Lady Hillary Clinton and screen personality Arlene Dahl. He is also a member of the Steinway Artist Roster.



Don't forget at our annual holiday concert we have our traditional goody table. Put your culinary talents to work and bring your best holiday treats to share with our members and guests.



***"Beyond the Rocks"* starring Gloria Swanson and Rudolph Valentino.**  
**Accompaniment by our own Lance Luce.**

**November 23<sup>rd</sup> 8pm. Doors open at 7**

(by Kevin Werner)

Captain Fitzgerald (Alec B. Francis), a retired guardsman on a modest pension, has to support three daughters: Theodora (Swanson) and her older half-sisters. Theodora's sisters pin their hopes on her marrying a wealthy man.

One day, Theodora goes out on a rowboat off the coast of Dorset and falls into the water. She is rescued by Lord Hector Bracondale (Valentino). He is young, handsome and wealthy, but "not the marrying kind". Out of a sense of duty to her beloved father, she reluctantly agrees to wed the middle-aged, short, stout Josiah Brown (Robert Bolder), a former grocer's assistant who is now a multi-millionaire.

They honeymoon in the Alps. By coincidence, Bracondale stops at the same inn. Rich American widow Jane McBride (Mabel Van Buren) persuades the young bride to accompany her on a climbing excursion. Theodora slips and dangles precariously by her safety line over a cliff. Bracondale appears and climbs down to her, but they are too heavy for the others to pull up. Bracondale has them lower him and Theodora to a ledge below. While they wait for more help to arrive, Theodora tells Bracondale (who does not initially recognize her) where they last met.

They meet a third time in Paris, and finally acknowledge their love for each other. However, Theodora refuses to run away with Bracondale.



Brandable strives to do the right thing. He asks his sister, Lady Anningford (June Elvidge), to befriend Theodora. Lady Anningford invites the Browns to her country estate. Bracondale, however, cannot stay away. He tries once again to persuade Theodora to change her mind, without success. Meanwhile, Josiah is persuaded by another guest, renowned explorer Sir Lionel Grey, to fund his dangerous expedition. Bracondale leaves, and Josiah is called away on business. Theodora writes a letter to each; to Bracondale, she declares her love, but stresses once more that it cannot be fulfilled. Morella Winmarleigh (Gertrude Astor), who desires Bracondale for herself, secretly opens the letters and, after perusing them, switches them. After Bracondale reads the message meant for Josiah, he rushes to stop Josiah from reading his, but is too late. Josiah accuses Bracondale of stealing his wife, but the nobleman denies that Theodora has been unfaithful. After further consideration, Josiah decides to put his wife's happiness ahead of his own and joins Grey's expedition to Northern Africa. His death makes it possible for the young lovers to be together.



Lance Luce is an internationally acclaimed theater organist. He has played hundreds of concerts all over the United States, Canada, England and Australia. In 2014 he was awarded Organist of the year by the American Theater Organ Society. Most recently he became the head organist for the Detroit Red Wings at the new Little Caesar's Arena in Detroit. He has played concerts for numerous chapters of the American Theater Organ Society and other affiliated theater organ groups and clubs. He has played for National and regional conventions of the ATOS in the United States and TOSA in Australia.

## ***Emergency Boiler Replacement***

(By Lindsay Robillard)

The 90-year-old Senate Theater's 30-year-old boiler has boiled its last, but we've got a plan to stay toasty this winter!

Heating an 15,000 square foot historic theater is no mean feat and after 30 years the old girl finally kicked the bucket. The good news is the new boiler (or boilers) will be much more energy efficient! The bad news is that boiler removal, purchase, and installation is expensive.

As a Member of the Detroit Theater Organ Society (DTOS) you know that we have been restructuring our business model to ensure we will be able to continue share our appreciation of the Mighty Wurlitzer with future generations. In 2019, we've turned a corner in this effort, with operating revenues covering our operating expenses. We had nearly 300 patrons at our silent feature, *Nosferatu* last month!

So, just like last year, we are mobilizing our membership and patrons of organ concerts, movie screenings and the broader community to invest in the future of our organization, our organ and our home, The Senate Theater.



Your generous donation will allow us to act quickly to replace the boiler without interrupting critical revenue generating programs! More than a boiler, your generosity now will secure the future of this one-of-a-kind instrument and make sure that a new generation is able to appreciate the beauty and heritage of theater pipe organs. Donations of all amounts are vital to this effort! Don't forget that we are a 501(C)(3) non-profit and your donations are tax deductible.

Checks can be made out to DTOS and mailed to the Senate Theater 5424 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI 48210

### Silent Film Series Secures Support! (By Lindsay Robillard)

We are thrilled to announce that our silent film series, **Silent at the Senate**, is receiving financial support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and Creators of Culture, which is administered by Culture Source on behalf of the Kresge Foundation and the Erg Family Foundation. Between the two sources, we've raised \$8,000 to directly underwrite and enhance our series that celebrates the unique experience of watching an organist bring a film to life. There is nowhere else to experience a silent film quite like you can at the Senate Theater, with our Mighty Wurlitzer, one of the greatest instruments ever built to accompany film.



In addition to screening films as varied as *Nosferatu* (Oct. 26) and *Beyond the Rocks* (Nov. 23, starring Rudolph Valentino and Gloria Swanson!), we will be providing tours of the organ chambers and opportunities for the audience to engage in a question and answer sessions with our guest artists about their approach. I hope you'll join us in spreading the word and making the Senate Theater Detroit' destination for silent film.

### Let's decorate the Theater for the Holidays.

(By Kevin Werner)

On November 30<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm, members will gather to give the theater the holiday spirit. We have a busy December so let's show off and deck the halls of the theater in style. Coffee and donuts will be provided.

Many hands make light work so please join us. won't you? Who knows someone might even fire up the old girl and play a few tunes for us.





### **Who remembers Peoples Restaurant?** (By Kevin Werner)

You can just make out the sign that reads "The Peoples market" in this photo taken in the 1920's. Tradition held that on concert day back in the early 1970's when I started going to the Senate with my family it was proper to visit either the Senate Coney Island for a hot dog or Peoples restaurant for a nice spaghetti dinner. Back then concerts were always held in the evenings and it was not just a concert, but a full evening spent having a nice dinner followed by fellowship with friends and culminating with a nice concert on the Mighty Wurlitzer. Unfortunately, Peoples closed its doors sometime in the 1980's followed shortly after with the end of the Senate Coney Island. Peoples restaurant was where you see "The Peoples market." I wonder if they switched over to an Italian restaurant.??? Who knows? You can just see the original Senate marquee on the right if you look carefully. In the foreground is a Will Rogers bill board. Will Rogers was a spokesperson for Kellogg Pep a whole wheat breakfast cereal introduced in 1923. You'll note the street cars going down Michigan avenue. The Michigan avenue street car ended on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1955.

(Photo courtesy of the Detroit News archives)

**Happy Thanksgiving everyone.**



♪♪♪ **Kevin's Notes.** ♪♪♪

As we read earlier in this newsletter the boiler needs to be replaced. This is a huge expenditure and reduces our reserves to a level that is not at all comfortable. We are confident that the new marquee will increase revenue, however we need to replenish our reserves for the next rainy-day event. Whatever that may be. On a personal note several years ago, I decided to join the board of Directors and start giving back to the place that had given so much to me and I believe I have done just that, and I am certainly not finished yet. After much thought and tossing around in my mind different ideas I decided that I should ask all of you to join me and give back to something that has meant so much to all of us. If each of you could donate \$500.00 that would replenish our reserves to the point that if we do have another unexpected expenditure, it would be covered. Many of us can't afford \$500.00 but what we can do is talk to friends, family, coworkers and others and ask them to donate just a little bit on our behalf to something that means a great deal to us. Who knows, it may exceed \$500.00. With that, the show will go on with your help. See you at the Senate.





Nov. 23 <sup>rd</sup> . 8pm. "Beyond the Rocks" Lance Luce Organist.	\$10.00
Nov. 30 <sup>th</sup> . 8pm. "Modern Times"	\$5.00
Dec. 8 <sup>th</sup> . 3pm. Pierre Fractalize Christmas Concert.	\$15.00
Dec. 14 <sup>th</sup> . 4pm. "Mickey's Christmas Carol"/The Grinch who stole Christmas"	\$5.00 12 and under free
Dec 21 <sup>st</sup> . 8pm. "The Miracle on 34th street".	\$5.00

Coming in 2020

Lance Luce in Concert

We'd love to hear from you. Questions, Suggestions... We even take requests!!  
Our Board of Directors are here to serve you. Email them at:

Lance Luce – President [lanceluce@wowway.com](mailto:lanceluce@wowway.com)

Michael Fisher - Vice President / Co-Treasurer [fisher.michael65@yahoo.com](mailto:fisher.michael65@yahoo.com)

Kevin Werner - Secretary / Co-Treasurer [kevwer@comcast.net](mailto:kevwer@comcast.net)

Lynn Walls – Director [clwalls@gmail.com](mailto:clwalls@gmail.com)

Paul Ovares – Director [paul.ovares.dc@gmail.com](mailto:paul.ovares.dc@gmail.com)

Stephen Warner – Director [sjwarner@umich.edu](mailto:sjwarner@umich.edu)

T.J. Casterson – Director [tcasterson73@gmail.com](mailto:tcasterson73@gmail.com)

Kevin Werner. Temporary editor.

