

THE DETROIT THEATER ORGAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2009

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Board looks at Laurel Park Place Mall Site

On Tuesday November 16th, President Dengate, George Orbits and Gil Francis met at the Laurel Park Place Mall in Livonia to evaluate a potential site that could become the new home for the Detroit Theater Organ Society.

Phoenix Theaters purchased a 10 screen cinema from AMC Theaters and is in the process of updating all the screens and plan on opening later this month. They have offered DTOS a 250 seat cinema to use as our new home as well as adjacent office space.

Evaluation of the theater indicates that most of the existing space could be used to house major components of the instrument,

with changes only to some of the electrical. The existing spaces would house the blower, relay and setter board. There is also space available for retail goods, a board room or artist's room. There are restrooms on the main floor outside the theater as well as a three - story, attached parking structure with an elevator down to the main corridor of the mall.

When we first started looking for a new home, the board knew that it would require changes to the structure to accommodate our needs. So far, this theater meets all of our needs with the exception of chamber space.

While there is plenty of

ceiling height above the existing space, changes to the structure would have to be made to create chamber space for the pipes. It would require creating a steel structure with a concrete floor to do this. We are working with an architect to determine the space needed and weight load that it would require. We hope to have an estimate of these costs by the end of the year and will pass them along to you when we get them.

I am sure that everyone is now wondering about the console and piano. Well, it will not be center stage in the theater because they want to continue showing movies there as well.

(See Mall on Page 4)

COMING TO THE SENATE:

- ◆ **January 3rd** Final Celebration Activities
- ◆ **January 26th** Board of Directors Meeting 7pm
- ◆ **February 23rd** Board of Directors Meeting 7pm
- ◆ **March 30th** Board of Directors Meeting 7pm

Final Celebration set for January 3rd

A final celebration is scheduled for all members (both past and present) on January 3rd. We will celebrate our 45 - year history at the Senate Theater by opening the console up for the members to play at 1pm.

Around 3pm, we are scheduling many professional organists to perform for the crowd with the help of Lance Luce.

At 5pm, a buffet will open in the lobby filled with hot and cold items and desserts.

Gil Francis has been put in

charge of contacting previous presidents of the society to attend and it would be nice to have a member from every year that we have been at the Senate and Iris Theaters.

All attendees will receive a special commemorative pen celebrating the 45 years we have been at the Senate and it should be a fun day.

If you can help with locating past members, please let them know of this event and have them stop by.

These are just a couple of

pictures taken when the Society took over the Senate in 1963.



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From The President's Desk

As we enter into the holiday season, I want to take this opportunity to wish the membership a wonderful holiday season and prosperous New Year in 2010.

Shortly, you will be receiving in the mail your annual dues notice from our Treasurer. There are a few changes to our schedule in 2010 and the amount of dues paid by the membership has changed this year. Please make note of this change and send in your payments and tax deductible donations by the end of the year to take advantage of the donation on your 2009 tax return.

Your continued financial support to DTOS is vital to our future success at a new home away from the Senate. While the board has taken action to reserve funds to move the instrument out of the Senate, there are many other things that your membership and donations pay for. For instance, your dues covers most of the artists fee's for performing. It also covers accommodations for out - of - town organists. Without your continued support, DTOS will have a brand new start at a new facility but no funding available for programs.

Being a member of the Society is

not the only way to support us. Please consider our non-profit organization and discuss with your financial advisors about putting DTOS as a beneficiary of part of your estate when the time comes. If your financial advisor needs specific information, please feel free to contact anyone on the board.

"VITALITY SHOWS NOT ONLY IN THE ABILITY TO PERSIST, BUT IN THE ABILITY TO START OVER"

Pipes and Chests

Last year, President Dengate was reading a story in the latest ATOS Journal about the Wurlitzer Company and noticed a vintage Photograph in the article of our instrument on the factory floor which dates back to 1927.

He began to investigate how to obtain a copy of the photograph from ATOS to include with our

records here at the Society and to get a print made to display.

He wrote a letter to Jeff Weiler from ATOS and after a short period of time, he received a high resolution copy of the photograph (lower right hand corner) from ATOS.

A large print will be made to

display on site with the photograph of the Wurlitzer at the Fisher Theater on opening night in 1928.

Did you know that the instrument has not been installed at the Senate longer than any other venue in it's 81 year history?



Board Room News

The Board of Directors had a regular meeting on November 24th at 7pm.

The meeting was called to order by President Dengate at 7:03pm. Phil Konopitski and Greg Hornby from Friedman Real Estate Group presented a strategy for marketing the Senate Theater and the associated properties owned by the Society. The properties have been on the market for 12 months with 3 price reductions and about 10 showings to prospective buyers.

The floor was then opened for questions by board members and others. A one year exclusive listing agreement was signed at the end of the discussion.

During the last month, a steam leak in the boiler was detected and fixed by an outside contractor. Repairs to the security alarm were completed free of charge by the alarm company and all motion detectors were checked for operation.

A motion was made and sec-

onded for the approval of funds to cover upcoming postal expenses for a membership survey and membership recruiting purposes.

A motion was made and seconded to reimburse Dave Calendine \$68.11 for expenses he incurred decorating the Senate for the holidays.

Bob Vigne and Dave Calendine reported great progress transferring reel-to-reel concerts to CD (Continued on Page 3)



Financially Speaking

At the regular Board of Directors Meeting held on November 24th, Treasurer Bob Weil distributed a profit and loss statement and balance sheet for November.

Overdue membership dues were collected which totaled \$110.00. Income from the John Lauter Concert was \$1,746.31 which included \$1,208.00 in ticket sales at the door.

Expenses for the month include \$800.00 for administration which includes a legal fee of \$450.00 to negotiate the \$150,000 donation from the Dave Brewer estate.

Other expenses were for the utilities and they totaled \$370.56. This amount does not include expenses for gas and electric because they were not available at the time.

The balance sheet shows that the Society has a total balance between all accounts of \$324,564.43. Most of these funds have been invested in short term Certificate of Deposits with about \$4,000 in the checking account to cover monthly expenses.

Most of the funds that we have will be used during the move of the instrument to a new venue

and to cover necessary renovations that the venue may need.

The Board of Directors is also expecting a large legal fee when a new venue is found to negotiate a long term agreement with the owners of the facility.

The Boardroom News (Continued from page two)

And they are up to September of 1970.

At the end of the meeting, discussion took place regarding the visit to the Phoenix Theater site (see front page story). The three members of the board that had the initial walk through updated the board with the advantages and disadvantages of the site. So

far, this has been the most viable site we have looked at to date. The Millennium Center in Southfield, Michigan has not expressed any further interest with us and the Masonic Temple in Detroit has shown interest but does not think that they could accommodate our concert schedule with the activities that they already have in place.

George Orbits and Gil Francis also looked at an Elks Club in Livonia last month but the on-site evaluation revealed that there was not enough square footage to house the instrument.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45pm.

Around Town

REDFORD THEATRE

John Lauter and Tony O'brien play Christmas on December 12th starting at 8pm. Tickets are \$12.

The 1983 film "A Christmas Story" on December 18 and 19th. Show times are identical to "The Wizard of Oz" for Friday and Saturday showings.

FOX THEATER

A Kenny Rogers Christmas on December 18th. Showtime at 7:30pm

The music of Michael McDonald on December 20th. Showtime at 7pm.

VAN ANDEL MUSEUM

Lance Luce plays the instrument on December 11th at 7pm and again on the 12th at 2pm.

The Senate Theater
6424 Michigan Avenue
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Office Telephone (313) 894-0850
Concert Hotline (313) 894-4100

www.dtos.org

Executive Board

Christopher Dengate, President
Dick Leichtamer, Vice President
David Calendine, Secretary
Robert Weil, Treasurer

Board of Directors

Steven Ball, Director
Jeff Cushing, Director
Gil Francis, Director
Tom Iwankovitsch, Director
Lance Luce, Director
George Orbits, Director

Mall (From the Front Page)

Instead, the console and piano will sit off to the right of the patron and right of the screen. Providing that funding is available, a new feature for us would be integrated into our new home. The new feature would be a fixed camera over the console that would project an image of the organist's fingers at work on the big screen. We are seeing this done at other venues and it gives you a whole new feeling of what the organist is

doing when he or she performs. The console and piano would be on a stage of their own with the hope that it will be ready to be played by members when time permits. Some of these details still need to be worked out.

With the financial investment that DTOS would provide to renovations, we would require

at least a 10 - 20 year agreement to stay and a stiff penalty for breaking the agreement early.

These are just some of the details of this new space. There is still a lot to be worked out and more information will follow as soon as it can be. We have not committed us in any way and want to have all the information available to the members when approval from them is required.

Membership Information

Some of the long time members of the "Club" have been reflecting on the past and the blood, sweat and tears that have been spent at the Senate over the years.

They all remember a time when they had to limit the membership into the "Club" to 400 members. Their hands were tied because of the limited seating at the Senate. They knew that most members brought spouses to concert's so they had to take that into account. If they did, the Senate would have 800 patrons which was just enough at the time. They can still remember times where there was "standing room only" for some of the most popular organists that came to town.

They all can remember the waiting list to become members as well and some would be on the list for years before an opening occurred and they had to be sponsored by an individual who was already a member.



A very special thanks goes out to Dave Calendine and his elf Bob Vigne for decorating the Senate for the Holiday Concert. Along with the music of Lance Luce, it put everyone in the mood for the holidays. Thanks Dave and Bob! (Photo courtesy of Bob Vigne)

Another big thanks goes out to Dave Voydanoff and Glenn Rank for putting together the program for last month's concert. If you were not in attendance and would like a copy of the program, send your request to:

Senate Program
630 Alberta
Ferndale, Michigan 48220-1802

DECEMBER TRIVIA QUESTION

On May 4, 1963 the club began the move from the Iris to the Senate. In 1964, the move was completed and John Muri performed on the Wurlitzer at the Senate for the first time but in what month?

- A. April
- B. June
- C. September
- D. March

LAST MONTHS TRIVIA ANSWER

. In 2010, our organization is proposing to sponsor organist and ATOS President Ken Double at the Redford Theatre. In what year did Ken debut at the Senate Theater for us?

- A. 1989
- B. **September 17, 1994**
- C. 1987
- D. 1996

