

# THE DETROIT THEATER ORGAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2010

VOLUME XLIX, ISSUE I

## *DTOS Gets Media Coverage*

Did anyone notice the photographer at the December Concert? How could you miss her? She was there before most of you arrived and stayed well after all of you left. You may have even been interviewed by her audio technician.

The photographer was Donna Terek who writes for the Detroit News. Her column is called "Donna's Detroit" and she chose the Detroit Theater Organ Society as her subject for her column printed on December 27th.

Donna found out about us and wanted to write about the great run that we have had at the Senate Theater and how we managed to get started with this piece of Detroit history. She took hundreds of pictures of our instrument and its inner workings both before and after the concert. Along

with the audio clips and interviews from her audio technician, she put together the article. A link to the article is located on our home page [www.dtos.org](http://www.dtos.org).

Earlier in the week, we were contacted by C and G Newspapers wanting to write about the Society and our history at the Senate. They met with Lance Luce on December 2nd for a photo shoot and the article appeared in the publication the week of the 6th. It appeared in circulations in the Birmingham, Madison Heights, Farming and Farmington Hills areas.

The purpose of both articles was to connect with the readers to tell the history of our Wurlitzer and organization. While we all agreed that it was sad that we were locking the doors at the Senate after 45 years, we were all excited

about the future of the organization and hope that it will generate some excitement with the reader to become part of the history as well.

### **COMING TO THE SENATE:**

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

## *Buyer for Senate comes forward with Plans*

On Friday December 11, President Dengate and Greg Hornby from the Friedman Real Estate Group conducted a tour of the Senate Theater to a interested party. Hours later, an offer was placed on the table for our review.

The offer is a cash deal in the amount of \$230,000 dollars for all of the property's. The properties were listed for \$275,000 dollars. There will be no mortgage or land contracts involved. In addition, no inspections will be required in this offer. The offer is only contingent on supplying the buyer with clear titles on the properties which DTOS already has. Of course, the

offer does not include the instruments or any historical documents with regard to the Society or Wurlitzer Opus 1953.

Upon receiving ten percent of the purchase price, the Board of Directors has 30 days to send out ballots to the Playing Membership to approve the sale. The by-laws do not allow the Associate Membership voting rights on the selling or purchasing of properties.

If the Playing Membership approves the sale, a closing date will be set and President Christopher Dengate will sign the purchase agreement on behalf of the Society. We will

then have 90 days to remove the instrument and specific items from the Senate before we finally turn the building over to the new owners.

The new owner currently owns a night club in the City of Detroit and will be expanding his business by moving to the Senate Theater. He has visions of bringing in live entertainment to the Theater as well as offering alcoholic beverages in the theater's concession area.

The properties have been on the market for 13 months and this is the only offer that we have received from any interested party.

### **INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

- The President's Desk* 2
- Pipes and Chests* 2
- The Boardroom News* 3
- Financially Speaking* 3
- DTOS receives donation* 3
- The Membership Page* 4

## *From The President's Desk*

Please allow me this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy New Year and welcome you back to another exciting year. We did very well financially last year, which will help us this year as we move forward.

If you missed the Christmas Concert last month, you missed some of the excitement in the air that was at the Senate in the early days. We had well over 300 people attending the concert and there were rumors of some having to park three blocks away. The excitement was in the air and many of you told me that you "had not seen a crowd like this in a long time" and that "this was the longest line for the chamber tour that I can remember". The winner of the 50/50 raffle took home over \$160.00 that night and the intermission lasted for about 45 minutes.

With the possibility of selling the theater soon, the Board of Directors needed to take action on moving the Fisher Wurlitzer by awarding one of the three bids they received. One of the bids was immediately eliminated because the company is based out of state. Although they would have done a great job, the added lodging expenses put them out of the market and the most expensive. The remaining two companies were Clark

We all enjoyed a great concert by Lance Luce who in the second half thanked a number of individuals who made the last 45 years at the Senate possible and, performed his rendition of "Happy Birthday" to yours truly. It was a concert that many of us will never forget. Much like the first concert in 1964.

It's now time to turn the page in our history and to write a new chapter. I only hope that this chapter will be as long as the last. It can and will be with the support of the membership and public at large. Keep the flame going by spreading the word about our organization and wonderful instrument while we sharpen our pencils and prepare to document another chapter. Your continued support is crucial to our existence. Without you, there is no organiza-

## *Pipes and Chests*

Wilson and Associates out of Ohio and Scott Smith from Lansing, Michigan. Both of the bids were very close in price and both would do a stellar job at packaging up the instrument.

The Board of Directors chose Scott Smith Pipe Organ LLC to perform the daunting task of packing up the instrument for storage for a couple of reasons. First, the vendor is in the state of Michigan. Second,

tion or possibility to hear this piece of Detroit history.

You should have received your membership dues notice by now which included a questioner from our membership chairperson. Please remember to return this with your dues. Not only are we making sure we have your up-to-date mailing information, but we want to know more about you. It only takes about 5 minutes to complete and the information that we get from it would be helpful in the future.

Donations are still needed to keep us going. The dues money goes far but think about what we could provide with a concert every month at a new location in 2011!

Scott has spent the past five years working on the instrument and has become very familiar with it. The Board thought that Scott would do a great job, and pay a little more attention to detail and documentation that this process will need to ease reinstallation in the future.

It is expected that this process may start as early as March if the Playing Membership approves the sale of the building and 4 months to complete.

## *2010 Concert Deal Signed*

On December 10, President Christopher Dengate signed an agreement with the Board of Directors at the Redford Theatre to sponsor several Organists this year.

Dengate brought the idea to the Motor City Theater Organ Society board back in August and it was well received at that time. It took several months and several revisions to the agreement to get to this final agreement that was a win-win situation for both organizations. "They get some financial gain from this and we get to continue with our concert schedule while we re-locate our Wurlitzer" said Dengate.

The DTOS Board of Directors hopes that the membership supports this new venue and change of pace. We are very lucky to be so close to a great facility who is willing to work with us and we hope that the membership supports them.

Some of the details include that DTOS pay all artist fees and expenses with regard to their visit. DTOS also agreed to pay for security services.

DTOS shall retain funds generated by ticket sales at the box office except MCTOS members. Those funds will be retained by MCTOS.

MCTOS has agreed to allow our recording engineer to set up microphones to record the concerts as well. MCTOS shall also retain all concession counter income.

A big thank-you has to go out to the Board of Directors at MCTOS for allowing us this opportunity at the Redford. It could not have happened without their support.

### **COMING TO THE REDFORD:**

- ◆ Feb 21– OPEN CONSOLE
- ◆ Mar 21– Organist Scott Foppiano
- ◆ Apr 18– Organist Mark Herman
- ◆ May 16– Organists Ken Double
- ◆ June 13– OPEN CONSOLE

All open console dates are open to DTOS playing members. Hours are 2pm - 5pm.

Admission to all concerts are free to DTOS members and 3 of their guests. Concerts start at 3pm.

### *Financially Speaking*

As of December 14, 2009, the treasurer has the following numbers to pass along to the membership. These figures are only partial figures for the fiscal year that started on January 1, 2009.

Operation donations from the Membership totaled \$1,180.00 and Pipe Organ fund donations totaled \$17,686.80. We also received a donation from the estate of Dave Brewer in the amount of \$150,000 dollars. Parting out the Brewer instrument from his basement generated over \$16,000 dollars.

Associate Memberships for 2009 generated \$2,950.00 of income into the Society and the Playing Memberships generated \$9,710.00.

The membership and patrons came

though for us on concert days in 2009 generating over \$11,000 dollars between the concession counter, music counter, 50/50 raffle tickets and box office tickets. Lastly, visitors going to the web site purchased \$206.00 in recordings and DTOS apparel.

Administration expenses for 2009 were \$1,686.77 which include \$465.00 in postage alone. Building security totals for 2009 were \$1,593.00. These figures are for the alarm service and security guard on concert and meeting dates.

Costs to operate the web site for the year were \$142.45. When we accepted the Dave Brewer instrument, we acquired a storage unit for 6 months which totaled \$1,363.65. The building expenses for last year

were \$2,659.27 and included both building repairs and winter snow removal service. Another \$328.70 was spent on repairs that we were able to do ourselves and was for parts/materials only.

The Society spent \$48,729.51 on the Wurlitzer in 2009. The eight organists that were hired to perform for you in 2009 cost \$10,266.52.

Electrical service for the building in 2009 was \$4,997.39 while gas totaled \$15,003.90. Telephone and internet service totaled \$1,655.51 and the water bill was \$2,332.27.

Total income for fiscal year 2009 was \$192,964.57 and total expenses were \$99,154.46 showing a net income of \$101,006.88.

### *DTOS Receives Financial Support*

President Dengate is pleased to announce that the organization is the recipient of yet another major financial donation from the estate of Dave Brewer.

On Monday, January 4th, Dengate received a telephone call from the attorney handling the estate indicating that the family wanted to make another financial donation to the organization in the amount of \$100,000 dollars. While we are not

sure how the donation will be spent, Dengate has instructed the treasurer to invest it in another certificate of deposit until which time a decision is made or a need is determined for it.

One of the ideas that will be brought to the table by Dengate is to restart a fund in Dave's name for the education of organ students in music programs. Most members of the organization are not aware that Dave was a self taught organist and never

received any formal training.

If you have any experience in setting up such a program, please let someone from the board know or send us a note. We would like to hear from you and get some ideas.

### *The Boardroom News*

A Special meeting of the Board of Directors was held on December 22nd to discuss the sale of the Senate and associated properties. In attendance were representatives from the Friedman Real Estate Group as well as Cousins Lansky law firm.

Suggested changes to the purchase agreement brought to the table by the Attorney were discussed. The representative from the Friedman Real Estate Group was there to answer any questions that the board or the attorney had regarding these changes. The changes themselves mostly dealt with clarifying the time

frame needed to remove the instrument from the Senate as well as extending the time frame needed for the membership to approve the sale to comply with the by-laws of the Society.

As previously mentioned, the Board also awarded the bid to remove the Wurlitzer to Scott Smith Pipe Organs LLC of Lansing, Michigan. The Board of Directors also approved a motion to form a Strategic Planning Committee to plan and make recommendations to the Board for the long term goals of the organization.

Steven Ball updated the Board with the progress of the plans for the University of Michigan as well as the Sterns Collection and the Bently Historical Museum.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30pm.

The Senate Theater  
6424 Michigan Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan  
48210

Office Telephone (313) 894-0850  
Concert Hotline (313) 894-4100

[www.dtos.org](http://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

## *Phoenix Theater Deal Falls Through*

Since the middle of last month, talks with the management at the Phoenix Theater in Livonia have fallen off. Initially, we thought that they were very busy getting the theater ready for their December 15th opening. Since that time, many e-mails and telephone calls to them have gone unanswered and it appears that they are no longer interested in the project

It appears that talks broke off after a lengthy discussion took place on where to make new chambers for the instrument. The most logical place would have been in the parking struc-

ture that is over the Theater that we were going to be using with sound chutes through the ceiling. This location would have taken between 40 and 50 parking spots and the Board was told that it was unlikely that the owner of the mall would agree to this plan.

The other plan was to create a second floor over a hallway, electrical room, office and restrooms for the chambers with sound chutes through one of the side walls of the auditorium. Not only was this plan expensive, it was inside of the building and maybe

fears that the instrument's sound would project into adjacent movie theaters made this no longer an option..

Another fear by members from our organization was that the instrument was just too large for the area that it was going to be installed in and could never be installed in a way where it would sound as good as it does at the Senate.

Although the location was great with good parking and a wonderful atmosphere, it could not be worked out.

## *Membership Information*

A reminder that all members should have received their annual dues notice. The membership rates have changed for this year with an Associate Member paying \$80 for the year and a Playing Member paying \$105.

Playing Members should be advised that the Wurlitzer is still available for private practice time. There are still a lot of details that have to be worked out before any disassembly will take place. This may not be started until March. Schedule your private time using the console reservation system at [www.dtos.org](http://www.dtos.org).

Final details are being worked out for a membership survey. The Board of Directors really needs to know what the membership's desires are so, please take a minute to take the survey and return it in the self addressed stamped envelope that will be provided.

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Gena Horning. If you come through the parking lot door during concerts, you were always greeted by her husband Norm is also reliable at the ticket counter. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Norm and his

family as they deal with this loss. Gena passed on January 4th after a long illness.

On December 22nd, the Board approved the request from Michael Fisher to upgrade his Associate Membership to a Playing Membership. Thanks Mike.

On December 22nd, the board also approved the playing membership of Richard Fowler from Troy, Michigan. Welcome Richard.

Celebrating an Anniversary or Birthday or want to send a member a special message? Let us know and we can help you by publishing it in the Newsletter. E-mail the editor of the Newsletter at:

[DENGATES@AOL.COM](mailto:DENGATES@AOL.COM)

If you have a business that you want to advertise, we can do that as well in the Newsletter if you send us a business card to:

DTOS Newsletter  
630 Alberta  
Ferndale, Michigan  
48220-1802

### **JANUARY'S TRIVIA QUESTION**

Scott Foppiano is scheduled to perform for us in March at the Redford and is the subject for this month's trivia.

With 6 digital recordings to his credit, his very first was:

- A. Christmas at the Arlington
- B. Fanfare
- C. Scott plays the Detroit Senate
- D. Scott Foppiano back in Black

### **LAST MONTHS TRIVIA ANSWER**

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**

