

## Mark Herman to ‘premiere’ at the Senate

Mark Herman is one of the few young people in recent years who has adopted an instrument that was in its heyday over half a century before he was even alive.

A native of Fort Wayne, Indiana, Mark was born in 1987. This barely thirty-something organist, pianist, composer, and performer has been deeply involved in music almost his entire life.

At seven, he started piano lessons, and by the time he was only 12, he was studying classical organ.

Somewhere in between, Mark had his first taste of the theatre organ when he was in the fourth grade at the Embassy Theatre in Fort Wayne.

In 2001, he began his formal theatre organ training with John Ferguson in Indianapolis.

In the summer of 2003, he was invited to make a cameo appearance at the American Theatre Organ Society’s national convention in Oakland.

The following year, he won the ATOS Young Theatre Organist Competition



that led to another highly-acclaimed appearance at the 50th anniversary ATOS convention in Pasadena, California.

During the summer of 2006, he toured Australia and New Zealand for six weeks, setting records in CD sales at many of the “Down Under” venues where he performed. Over the past two years, he has played numerous solo con-

certs from coast to coast.

Recently, he released his first CD recording, *Premiere*, appropriately where it all began – on the 4/16 Page at the Embassy Theatre. The original arrangements were, in his words, “to display the rich tonal resources this wonderful instrument has to offer.”

And true to form, he has been selected as one of the performing artists for this year’s ATOS convention in Indianapolis, playing Monday, July 7, at – where else – The Embassy Theatre.

In addition to his concert work, Mark is a second year student at the Theatre School at DePaul University in Chicago, majoring in theatre arts with a focus on theatre management.

Although he is best known for his theatre organ stylings, he also performs on piano and has several original compositions under his belt.

This will be a rare treat – to hear someone so young and talented in his *premiere* appearance at the Senate on Sunday, May 18, at 3:00 PM. Invite your friends to share this youthful experience.

## President presents “State of the Senate”

At the annual meeting on April 29, 2008, president Chris Dengate gave his 2007 year in review. Space does not permit printing the entire message, but here are the highlights:

- Radio spots on WRCJ and program advertising at the Fisher Theatre promoted DTOS and raised awareness.
- Overall concert income increased by \$3,488.88 compared to 2006.
- \$2,141.00 revenue came from concert ticket sales alone.
- The Senate is available for rentals for

special events. Three events are being booked for June 2008. Proceeds from these events will help fund the proposed main floor restrooms, a priority project, and we’re determined to get the projected started in the next two years.

- An improved presence of our own website (thanks to Lance Luce) and high visibility on WRCJ-FM’s website.
- Increased revenue from investments from donations, providing almost \$4,000.00 in additional monies.
- Progress in archiving our library of

over 600 concert recordings from tape to CD. 80 discs have been done to date.

- A national convention for Detroit. (see related story on page two.)
- Over \$55,000 spent to rebuild the organ. \$3,000 spent to rebuild the blower.
- \$14,000 spent in repairs to the building and ancillary expenses.
- An additional \$30,000 was raised in spite of our declining membership and level of donations.
- Theatre was operated with minimal volunteers and resources.

# DTOS honors three of its own for service

Three DTOS members were chosen for their dedication and service to the Society and then honored during the Ken Double concert last month.

**Gil Francis** and **Jim Casterson** received the *Honorary Membership Awards*.

Gil served for many years on the board, and he is the only member who served in all four officers' positions. From secretary to treasurer, president to vice-president, Gil has always been one to accept responsibility and help move the organization forward.

Even when he was no longer a board member, he continued to assist the board and currently is researching and applying for the royalties for the sale of the Hazelton CDs. True to form, Gil is *back*

on the board for a brand new 2008 term.

Jim Casterson kept the Senate running like a well-oiled machine for many years until health issues forced his "retirement." Jim worked under Tom Lewandowski for many years, and then he took over and aptly managed the physical plant for many more years. He's largely responsible for the great condition the theatre is in today.

"Both of these men deserve not only the recognition but our gratitude for their years of service," said President Chris Dengate. "They 'live and breath' the Senate, and their dedication is much appreciated."

*The Distinguished Service Award* was presented to **Lance Luce**.

His contributions are almost too nu-

merous to mention.

Lance saved the Society literally thousands of dollars by producing the website, the new brochure, and other marketing communications materials, including the artwork for the new Tom Hazelton CD project.

He continues to promote DTOS on his concert tours by selling our *Members Only* CD. "Somehow, Lance leaves with a full box of CDs and manages to come back with an empty one," Chris noted. "That's just part of his commitment to DTOS and our well-being."

He's a frequent contributor to *The Reservoir* newsletter, and like the other two awardees, is just an all-around nice guy with the best interests of the Senate at heart. Congrats to all three.

## Election results posted

At the April 2008 board meeting, election results were announced. Of the 106 ballots mailed, only 53, or 50%, were cast and counted.

Returning to the board are: Robert Weil, Lance Luce, Dick Leichtamer, and Tom Iwankovitch. Newly elected members include Gil Francis and Ed Seward. Scott Smith was re-elected organ trustee.

Executive board members are: Chris Dengate, president; Dick Leichtamer, vice-president; Robert Weil, treasurer; and Dave Calendine, secretary.

A big "thank you" to Jack and Carol Uelsmann who orchestrated the election by preparing, mailing, and counting the ballots.

"It's very time-consuming," said president Chris Dengate, "and their efforts are *greatly* appreciated by everyone – more than we can ever express."

## Projects discussed, proposed at April meeting

Several renovation and improvement projects were discussed at the April 2008 Board of Directors' meeting.

First is the theatre's facade. It is something less than "inviting." The vinyl, flanking the entry doors, lacks pizzazz, detracts from the overall appearance of the building, and diminishes our curb appeal.

It was proposed that the entry be upgraded by replacing the vinyl material with brick.

Chris Dengate agreed to take on the project, secure estimates, and present bids by the end of May. The board will then decide, based on the cost, whether to proceed with the enhancement project.

If the decision is made to move forward, the work will be done this summer during our normal "down time."

Also on the 'punch list' of things to do is to replace the three ceiling fans in the house.

One of the fans does not work, and a second one has been making a lot of noise for the past several years – not very conducive to concerts. The third one is working, but it only makes sense to replace all three at the same time.

The fans not only help cool the theatre during warmer weather, but in the winter, they assist with heating by forcing the warm air around the ceiling down into the auditorium.

What makes this a difficult task is the way the fans must be accessed. Each one must be lowered from the attic over the auditorium seating. This is much more than a one- or two-person job. The work is scheduled to be done soon.

## Looks like it's a "lock"

Several DTOS members took the opportunity to meet with Ken Double during his Senate appearance to lock-in Detroit as the host city for the 2011 ATOS convention. Ken is the current ATOS president.

With the help of our members and other organizations, we should have enough support and resources to pull it off and put Detroit on the "theatre organ map."

## The 2008 DTOS Concert Season

Keep this concert schedule handy and share it with your friends.

*June 8* ..... *Jonas Nordwall*

*July* ..... *Members' Concert*

*August* ..... *DTOS Activity*

*September 21* ..... *Rich Lewis*

*October 19* ..... *Trent Simms*

*November 16* ..... *Paul Roberts*

*December 7* ..... *Dave Calendine Duo*