

# THE DETROIT THEATER ORGAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2009

VOLUME XLVIII, ISSUE XI

## *John Lauter appears on November 15th*

Detroit native John Lauter has been presenting theatre organ concerts for over 20 years. John made his public debut at the Redford theatre at age 16. Since those early days John has presented concerts in Chicago, at the Oriental theatre, VanDerMolen residence, Krughoff residence, the 19<sup>th</sup> Hole Restaurant and the St. Mary of the Lake Seminary auditorium in Mundelein. Lauter has been featured in programs at the Paramount theatre in Denver, the Castro theatre in San Francisco, the Richard Knight auditorium of Babson college in Boston, the Organ Stop Pizza restaurant in Phoenix, The Rialto theatre in Joliet, IL and the Palace theatre in Marion, Ohio. The Ohio

theatre in Columbus featured John in organ overtures to their popular classic film series. Recently John played concerts in Toronto, at Casa Loma, and in Kingston, Ontario, at the Kingston theatre organ society's Kimball organ, the Public Museum of Grand Rapids (Michigan) and the Little river studio Wurlitzer in Wichita, Kansas and the Auditorium theatre in Rochester, NY and at the Cleveland Ohio Grays Armory for the American Theatre Organ Society's 2009 convention.

John spent three years playing at "Theatre Organ Pizza and Pipes" in Pontiac, Michigan. At home in Detroit, John has

presented 7 concerts at the Detroit Theatre Organ Society, and many concerts and silent film programs at the Redford theatre.

In preparation for the opening of their new IMAX theatre, the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn contracted John to compose and record a silent film accompaniment to a silent film collage featured in a specially produced IMAX short subject shown before each feature there.

John is the organist for the Unity Church of Lake Orion, and is also in demand as a pianist at local Detroit restaurants. John lives in Farmington Hills, Michigan with his wife Amy, son Benjamin and daughter Maryanna

### COMING TO THE SENATE:

- ◆ John Lauter - Nov. 15th
- ◆ Board Meeting  
Nov. 24th at 7pm
- ◆ Lance Luce - Dec. 6th

## *Lance Luce celebrates the Holidays on December 6th*

Lance Luce is an internationally acclaimed theatre organist. He has played hundreds of concerts all over the United States, Canada, England and Australia.

His concerts are praised for appealing to audiences of all ages, containing a wide variety of musical styles. At age 18, Lance won 1st place honors in the Yamaha National Electone organ competition in California. The next year he was appointed the Head Staff Organist at Radio City Music Hall in New York,

on the largest Wurlitzer ever built.

Lance has made many recordings, including being part of the famous "Theatre Organ Greats - A Salute to Radio City Music Hall" double LP. For many years, Lance was the "Featured Entertainment" at the console of a theatre organ at several "Pizza Parlor" style restaurants (two in Michigan) and the highly successful "Organ Grinder Restaurant" in Toronto Canada, where he played for 8 years.

Lance began playing the theatre pipe organ at age 10 at the Royal Oak Theatre near his Michigan home. By age 13 he was playing at that same theatre for intermissions. During his teenage years he began playing the organ at a local church on Sundays, and 3 nights a week at a local skating rink, and performed countless times for area organ clubs and societies.

Lance has been a church organ consultant in Michigan since 1991.

**(SEE LANCE PAGE 4)**

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## *From The President's Desk*

On November 1, 2008 I was authorized by the Board of Directors to enter into a one year exclusive listing agreement with Friedman Real Estate Group for the purpose of dissolving all of the real property owned by the Society. The asking price at that time was \$475,000. This month, I would like to take an opportunity to update the membership on this matter.

Over the last year, we have showed the properties to many different individuals who showed interest and could see the potential of the Senate Theater as a night club, church, bar or entertainment venue. However,

they all had a common thread which was financing their projects.

On March 1, 2009 a decision was made to lower the asking price of the properties to \$375,000 which brought in more of the same type of investors to the Senate for what is commonly referred to as a walk through of the building.

To this date, we currently have no offers on the table for the purchase of all the real property owned by the Society and we have lowered the asking price again to \$275,000.

I would also like to remind everyone of the process that must take place should an offer be made on the properties. The by-laws state that the Board of Directors may not enter into any purchase or selling agreements regarding property unless the offer has been approved by the membership at large.

The Board of Directors is exploring their options with regard to everything that remains in the Senate such as office equipment, furniture and electronic equipment.

“ACCEPT CHALLENGES,  
SO THAT YOU MAY FEEL  
THE EXHILARATION OF  
VICTORY”

## *Pipes and Chests*

In 2005, the Board of Directors decided to make the rebuilding of our Wurlitzer a priority and put true craftsman in the field of organ rebuilding on the task. “We were tired of all the dead notes and siphor’s in the middle of a performance and thought our membership and visiting organists deserved better” recalls President Denagte.. In addition,

at the time, we were not meeting our obligations in the Artists contracts which speculate that we provide visiting organists an instrument that is in “concert ready” condition.

Local pipe organ technicians Scott Smith, Ken Holden and their crews have spent the last four years on the job at the Senate and reported to the Board of

Directors in September that 100 percent of the relay has been rebuilt and 75 percent of the chests have been re-leathered. 80 year old leather has been replaced with the better quality leathers of today and the siphor’s of yesterday are long gone.

## *Board Room News*

The Board of Directors meet for their regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday October 27th at the Senate.

The Meeting was called to order by President Dengate at 7:02pm. President Dengate announced that the Society had received a financial gift from the Dave Brewer Estate in the amount of \$150,000 dollars. President Dengate suggested that this additional funding be set aside to cover building expenses in 2010 while the remaining funds be

saved for future use. He also indicated some unforeseen expenses correcting computer problems with the alarm system and the replacement of one of the back-up batteries in the amount of \$300.00.

During last month, the boiler for the Theater stopped working and a water valve had to be replaced. Repair costs to get it operational again were about \$500.00 according to treasurer Bob Weil.

Additional security measures were requested for the building as we move into 2010. One of them was to get quotes from the alarm company to add a external speaker on the building for when the alarm is tripped. Another change that is being considered is to eliminate the telephone lines currently used by the alarm company and replace them with a radio frequency (RF) type system. Estimates will be obtained in time for the November 24th meeting.

## *Financially Speaking*

At the October Board of Directors meeting, Treasurer Robert Weil distributed a Profit and Loss statement that reflected the following income and expenses for October.

Scott Smith's program generated a total income of \$800.95, of which \$604.00 was ticket sales alone. The remaining income came from the concession counter, record counter, 50/50 raffle and donation basket.

During the month, administration expenses were \$414.07.

Included in this amount was about \$190.00 for printing and mailing of this newsletter. Starting in January, members that have e-mail will only receive

notification by e-mail with direction on where to find the newsletter on our web site. This will reduce the number of copies made and mailed to the membership.

Maintenance costs for the month which include the boiler repairs previously mentioned and repairs to the Wurlitzer totaled \$2,498.06.

Utility costs at the time the report was generated were \$418.35 which were telephone, internet service and water/sewer.

Bob had indicated to the Board that all of the utilities were on the services budget plan much like you can do with your own utilities at home. Every year,

each company will audit our use and re-calculate a monthly payment depending on use. This has helped us with budgeting for the Society.

Annual dues notices will be going out in the mail the first week of December. Due to a reduced concert schedule in 2010, please remember that your dues have been reduced. Playing members will pay \$105.00 and Associate Members will pay \$80.00.

## *The Boardroom News (Continued from page two)*

A long discussion took place regarding what to do with the instrument in 2010. The Organ Trustee Committee submitted a proposal that we keep the instrument "playable" for as long as possible. With the additional funding that we received, this is now possible and it is likely that the instrument will be made available for the playing mem-

bership for the first six months of 2010 unless the building is sold sooner. No action was taken on the three bidders to remove the instrument from the Senate at this time.

Steven Ball gave the Board an update on the possibility of the instrument becoming part of the Sterns Musical Collection on the campus of the University of

Michigan and advised the Board that a written proposal may be ready for Board Action at the November Meeting. In addition, Ball advised that the University is being considered to house the archives of the ATOS at the Bentley Historical Library.

## *Around Town*

### **REDFORD THEATRE**

The 1939 classic "The Wizard of Oz" November 20 starting at 8pm. Organ overture at 7:30pm and then twice on the 21st at 2pm and 8pm. Organ overtures 1/2 hour prior to show.

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**

The Musical "101 Dalmations" on November 17 - 22. Show times at 7:30pm.

The Christmas Music of Mannheim Steamroller on November 27th. Showtime at 8pm.

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** in

downtown Grand Rapids is hosting a Fall Organ Concert Series on November 13th and 14th. Friday Showtime is at 7pm and Saturday's Showtime is 1pm. Lance Luce plays the instrument on December 11th at 7pm and again on the 12th at 2pm.

### **GRAND LEDGE OPERA**

**HOUSE** in Lansing is featuring Organist Stephen Warner on the Organ with Saxophonist Adam Olson on November 22nd at 3pm.

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#### **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

## *Lance (from page 1)*

He is currently the church organ consultant for Allen Organs and Reuter Pipe organs for Evola Music.

Lance has designed and installed over 200 organs in churches, homes and institutions. His background includes pipe organ repair and building, as well as electronic organ design, installation, voicing, and pipe interfacing.

Lance is currently on the staff at

the Fox Theatre, and is one of the organists at the Redford Theatre in Detroit, Michigan. He continues to be a church organist, recording artist, and maintains a busy concert schedule.



## *Membership Information*

Membership Chair Gary Grzibnik is in the process of putting a survey together for the membership. Look for it during the month of December and we encourage you to take a minute to respond. A self addressed return envelope will be provided to you.

Once again this year, we are asking that every member attending the December Concert bring a tray to pass at the intermission buffet. Attendance at this concert is expected to be large so please keep that in mind when you go shopping.

Please keep Marvin Spear in your prayers as he recovers at home from a recent illness.

Declining health has caused our longtime security guard Hank Tafoya to move to Chicago. His grandson Scott has taken his place for the remaining concerts here at the Senate Theater.

The mystery organist last month was our own Lance Luce. Hope to see you at his concert on December 6 at the Senate.



#### **NOVEMBER TRIVIA QUESTION**

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. 1994
- C. 1987
- D. 1996

#### **LAST MONTHS TRIVIA ANSWER**

Which of the following organists performed more times for DTOS between 1970 and 1980?

- A. Bill Thompson
- B. John Muri
- C. **Lyn Larsen**
- D. Don Baker

Lyn Larsen performed in 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 77, 78 and 80 taking the top performing artist for DTOS for that 10 year span.

