

***JUSTIN LAVOIE CONCERT AT THE RYLANDER ON AUGUST 8 AT 7:30 PM
THEN OFF TO BUCKY'S FOR THE AUGUST MEETING AND BIRTHDAY BASH ON
AUGUST 9 AT 2:00 PM***

Our August meeting will be at 2:00 pm on Sunday, August 9 at the Bucky Reddish residence in Butler, GA following a free 7:30 pm concert on the preceding Saturday evening, August 8, at the Rylander Theatre in Americus, GA, which is about 40 miles south of Butler on US19. Both events feature young artist Justin LaVoie at the console—see more details in the following articles.

ABOUT THE ARTIST... At age six, Justin LaVoie heard a theatre organ recording for the first time, instantly instilling a passion for the instrument within him. Starting in 2008, Justin attended several ATOS Summer Youth Adventures, deepening his knowledge of the musical and mechanical aspects of the theatre organ. In recognition of his diligence as an organ student, he was named ATOS Student of the Year in 2010, after which he began a period of study with acclaimed theatre organist Jelani Eddington. At



the 2013 ATOS National Convention in Atlanta, Justin won the ATOS

Young Theatre Organist Competition, achieving the prestigious title of Overall Winner. Now twenty years old, Justin performs regularly on theatre organs across the United States, and is pursuing a Bachelor of Music Arts degree in organ at the University of Oklahoma. Away from the console, he enjoys cooking, spending time outdoors, listening to a wide variety of music, maintaining his extensive collection of early 20th century box cameras, and (of course) restoring his personal Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ!

WHAT A THEATRE ORGAN "FIX" IN AUGUST!

By Ken Double

If, by the time this month ends, you aren't basking in the glow of more theatre organ activities than we have ever had (outside of conventions and FFOW), then perhaps there is no hope!

One weekend, we will have young Justin LaVoie at the Rylander Theatre in Americus, then at Bucky's for the Birthday Bash. That's August 8 and 9, and this young man is as exciting and talented a young player as ATOS has seen for a long time. He was the ATOS Young Theatre Organist Competition winner at our Atlanta convention, and a student of Jelani Eddington who has learned his lessons well. Justin will be starting his second year at the University of Oklahoma.

The following weekend, Sunday August 16th, the Atlanta Fox continues its celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Saving of the Fox with a special day with Mighty Mo. It will be "Legends" themed, with Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd, and Laurel and Hardy on the screen in a comedy legends event. Our own Ken Double will play Mighty Mo and accompany an afternoon of silent film comedy. And Larry-Douglas Embury will be providing his pre-show music and sing-a-long fun as well.

Pre-shows at the Strand, more of Mighty Mo at other Coca Cola Summer Film Festival events at the Fox, and lots of wonderful theatre organ music all during the month of August. See the calendar at the end of the newsletter for details. See you in Americus, at Bucky's and at the Fox!



***PRESIDENT'S
MESSAGE...***

August is The Busy Month of 2015. It begins on the 1st with "The General" at the Alabama (Tom Helms), and concludes on the 30th with "Wings" at the Strand (Ron Carter). And in between there are silent comedies at the Fox (Ken Double) to

celebrate the role that Mighty Mo played in saving the theatre 40 years ago. Silent movies were the *raison d'être* for the theatre organ at the beginning and still a fine reason to hear one now – and to invite your friends for their first experiences!

August 8th is our chapter meeting featuring one of the top young stars of our art. We have heard Mark Herman, Donnie Rankin, Nathan Avakian, David Gray and Danny McCollum

early in their careers, and now we add Justin LaVoie to the lineup of historic concerts by the tremendous young people of the theatre organ. This is, of course, at the Rylander: a chance to hear James Thrower's wonderful gift and John Tanner's incomparable work – in Justin's hands a guarantee of a fine, fine evening. And our first time in Americus since the convention. The

(Continued on page 3)

**Atlanta Chapter,
American Theatre Organ Society**

P.O. Box 426
Marietta, Georgia 30061-0426
404-725-1155
www.atosatlanta.org
www.facebook.com/ATOSAtlanta

*AC/ATOS is recognized as a tax-exempt organization under
Section 501.c.3 of the Internal Revenue Code.*

Chapter President - *Larry Davis*
Vice President - *Ken Double*
Treasurer - *Rick McGee*
Secretary - *Randy Cobb*
Newsletter Editor - *Elbert Fields*
Chapter Correspondent - *Larry Davis*

*Ads or announcements for this newsletter:
Contact Elbert Fields at 770-435-7340 or
elfields@yahoo.com*

THE RYLANDER ORGAN

By John Tanner

Officially known as the Frank Sheffield Memorial Organ, it was originally installed in the Riviera Theatre in Scranton, Pennsylvania in 1928. Built by the M. P. Möller company, it is an older sister to the organ in the Fox Theatre Atlanta. After the organ was removed from the Riviera, it had several owners, including Joe Patten.

When the Rylander theatre was undergoing restoration, John McCall, Jr. suggested that an organ was needed to fill the empty chambers. James Thrower, who owned the organ, donated the instrument to the theatre. Through a generous donation by Anne and Bradley Hale, the organ was restored and enlarged to its full specification by A. E. Schlueter Pipe organs.

The restored theatre and organ made their debut in October of 1999. As originally installed in the Riviera, the organ was 3 manuals and 7 ranks with



preparations for a total of 11 ranks.

Since the organ was installed, there has been some re-specification of the console to add some additional pitches and couplers, and make the organ a little more artist-friendly, but still keeping many of the specifications that Möller had designed.

Many nationally known artists, as well as chapter members, have performed concerts and accompanied silent motion pictures on this organ.

Directions to Bucky's

10 Willow Street, Butler, GA 31006 — Phone 478-862-3479

By Mike Hutcherson

Butler is halfway between I-75S and I-85S in south Georgia. Coming from Atlanta, the shortest route is to come down Hwy 19S. It's four-lane all the way from Atlanta to Butler. (Drive time from the State Capital Building in downtown Atlanta to Bucky's is a little over 2 hours under normal traffic conditions.) Here are the directions:

From Atlanta, take I-75S / I-85S

- On the Southside of Atlanta you'll past under I-285. Continue south. You'll see signs for the State Farmer's Market and a Rooms To Go Store on the left side of the interstate.
- **Exit onto Hwy 19S/ Hwy 41S to Griffin.**
- When you come into Griffin, you'll see North Griffin Square Shopping Center on the right. It contains a Belk store. Continue south. You'll past Wal-Mart on the right. Just past Ryan's on the right stay straight. If you exit to the right, you'll go to downtown Griffin and out of the way. You're on the Griffin Bypass. Just before the second traffic light, on the right side of the road you'll see St. John's Lutheran Church and Ingles.
- **Exit onto Hwy 19S at the traffic light heading to Zebulon**
- **Go through Zebulon and stay on Hwy 19S to Thomaston**
- **Go through Thomaston and stay on Hwy 19S to Butler** (If going to Americus, continue south on US-19)
- As you enter Butler, the speed limit starts dropping quickly down to 35 mph. This is the speed trap area. **Slow Down !!** (Just ask Grumpy) Continue south into Butler. You'll soon see a Piggly Wiggly, Subway, and Ameris Bank.
- **Turn left on Edgewood Drive**—go past Pine Avenue
- Turn left onto Willow
- Bucky's house is the first house on the right. It's gray with a front porch.
- It is ok to park in the vacant lot next door.

From Americus take US19N.

- When you reach Butler, go through the traffic light. First road to right is Edgewood.
- Turn right on Edgewood. Go past Pine Avenue then left on Willow. Bucky's is first house on the right.

PAST RYLANDER**ORGANISTS:**

By John Tanner

In the June 2010 Atlanta Chapter ATOS newsletter, I did an article describing the two organs that had been installed in the Rylander Theatre. Since that time, more research into the subject has revealed a whole group of organists that played these instruments from 1921 to 1932.

Some of these organists will be familiar to the readers of my articles and some will have a little knowledge of and some have faded with time.

Several years ago I attended a silent film program that the score was accompanied by a well-known organist. After the film when the organist came off stage, he remarked to me how exhausted he was after playing the film. I can only imagine how tiring it was to the following group of organists who had to play several showings of the film each day and in many instances, like at the Rylander, they would have had to play several different films a week, with little or no rehearsal.

So in tribute to the hard-working Rylander organists, I now present their

names.

All the dates are for when they first played at the theatre, but that does not indicate how long they played at the theatre.

Miss. Cecil Ryals, January 1921, formerly organist in Atlanta and Macon, a graduate of Bernau College.

Alferd A. Gane, September 1923, formerly of the Atlanta Howard Theatre. Mr. Gane would also organize The Community Symphony Orchestra, that would present several concerts at the Rylander over the next several years. Mr. Gane would leave in March of 1924 to go to the Academy of Music in Selma, Alabama.

Frank Sheffield 1923, was the organist for the Community Symphony Orchestra and would also fill in as organist at the Rylander.

Elizabeth Haddock, March 1924, who had played organs at the Capitol and Rialto in Macon. After leaving the Rylander, she returned to Macon and later married Noble Arnold, who was later manager of the Fox Theatre in Atlanta.

Jack E. Tracy, September 1924, Mrs. T.W. Taylor, December 1925, also an organist from Macon. Mrs. Thomp-

kins, March 1925.

Paul Jones, June 1926. Mr. Jones was organist at the Empire Theatre in Montgomery and was brought to the Rylander when the Gortatowsky took over control of the theatre.

Annice Sullivan, February 1927. Annice would play the Kimball organ and then play the Robert Morton organ after it was installed in November of 1927. She would continue to play the organ until the Rylander installed sound equipment for films in June of 1929.

In 1931 the Gortatowsky brothers put the Robert Morton to a new use, in providing music before the movies and accompany the audiences during the sing-a-longs.

Grace Pittman, August 17, 1931. Grace gets the ball bouncing before she goes to, Monticello, Georgia, to teach music.,

Frances Pittman August 30, 1931. Grace's daughter keeps the ball bouncing.

Elizabeth Broadhurst, October of 1931. It's not known how long she played, but one can assume that shortly afterwards the effects of the Depression would stop the ball from bouncing.

THE HOTELS IN AMERICUS ARE AS FOLLOWS, BY RATING ON TRIP ADVISOR

1. Best Western Windsor Hotel (1 block from the Rylander)
125 West Lamar Street
Americus — 229-924-1555
(Inquire if there is a special rate for Rylander patrons)

2. Quality Inn
1209 South Martin Luther King Blvd (1.5 miles)
Americus — 229-924-4431

3. Hampton Inn
1609 East Lamar Street (1.1 miles)
Americus — 229-924-3890

There are several restaurants that are within walking distance of the theatre.

Courtesy of Larry Davis

President's Message (Continued from page 1)

next day, we're back at Bucky's and the grand Walker organ where we have heard so many of the world's best artists as we celebrate his birthday once again. Be sure and join us for the weekend. We don't get down to the Rylander often, and to Bucky's only yearly now, so take this opportunity to do something you won't often get to do.

Birmingham, Americus, Butler, and if you've really got your riding boots on, you can travel to Meridian, Mississippi on the 23rd, to the historic Temple Theatre to hear the Robert Morton organ in performance and, yes, another short silent comedy – I guess I should tell you I'm playing that one.

Three states, six instruments, two Möllers, a Wurlitzer, a Robert Morton, a Walker, an Allen. And then it will be September – but I can't think about that now.

Let us say thanks to the **Community of Americus, Georgia, to Heather Stanley, Will Dozier, the staff and ushers of the Rylander Theatre**, for their vision, foresight and dedication to preserving a fabulous theatre and a grand pipe organ, and for presenting both to the world.

Stay in touch,,

Larry Davis

Upcoming Meetings & Events *(Mark your Calendars)*

- August 8th (Saturday), 7:30 pm, Justin LaVoie at the Rylander Theatre in a public concert with free admission—donations appreciated
- **August 9th (Sunday), 2:00 pm, Bucky's Birthday Bash in Butler, GA with Justin LaVoie plus Ron Carter, Larry Davis, Ken Double, John McCall, Rick McGee and a cast of thousands!**
- August 16th (Sunday) Atlanta Fox Theatre presents "Celebrating the Legends." The legend of Mighty Mo and the Kings of Silent Film Comedy. This event is part of the 40th anniversary of the Saving of the Fox and the Coca Cola Summer Film Series.



Strand Movies with organ pops pre-slows. Come support the Earl Smith Strand Theatre as it features the Atlanta Chapter's Mighty Allen GW-IV Theatre Organ
 Tickets may be purchased by calling the box office at 770-293-0080 or on the web at www.earlsmithstrand.org.

One important change is the silent comedy shorts involving Chapter organists has been re-scheduled for Saturday Sept 26th at 2 pm and will be a part of the Strand's 80th birthday celebration.

WINGS - the first academy award winning movie will be screened at the Earl Smith Strand on Sunday afternoon August 30th, 3pm in Blu-ray! A fantastic print of this silent epic!! Accompanied by Ron Carter using the original Wings love theme. Starring Richard Arlen, Buddy Rogers and Clara Bowe with a cameo by Gary Cooper. Come early for the pre show and sing-a-long by Larry Davis.

SILENT COMEDY SHORTS - Please note this has been rescheduled to be a part of the Strand's 80th Birthday celebration. Saturday, September 26 at 2 pm. Come early for an organ pre-show and sing-a-long. Organists Phillip Allen, Ron Carter, Larry Davis and Misha Stefanuk.

THE STRAND's 80th Birthday celebration begins Thursday evening September 24th with a spectacular POPS concert by Marietta's Symphony on the Square (50+ musicians) with vocals by Catherine Moulton. (you've heard her at the Carter Center for the Performing Arts). Great selections from Broadway and the Great American Songbook!! This Friday night a great classic film with organ preshow. Saturday is the ATOS/STRAND Silent Comedy Shorts followed that evening by The Rat Pack and charity casino. More to come!

IMPORTANT !

All parking is on the street in front of the Rylander or in the city lot across the street. Absolutely no parking in back...

Monroe's Restaurant next to the Rylander owns the lot immediately in back of the restaurant in front of the stage door to the Rylander and is having violator's cars towed. You have been warned!