

SUNDAY, MARCH 9TH, 3 P.M.

Larry Davis at the McKoon Residence in Newnan



As a result of the questionable weather on our meeting day our **January meeting with Larry Davis at the keyboard** was postponed to March 9th. Our venue will be the same, that is, the McKoon

residence in Newnan. We appreciate the McKoon's hospitality in allowing us to reschedule with them on such short notice. It is always a pleasure to have a program in their home and enjoy their Allen Custom 317.

We suggest you review the front page of our January edition of the newsletter for interesting information on both Larry and the McKoon's Allen organ. If your printed copy is no longer available you can see the article in color on our website — <http://theatreorgans.com/georgia/atlanta/atos/>

Directions to the McKoon's
395 Fairway Court, Newnan, GA
Phone: 770-251-4284

Take I-85 south to Exit 51. Turn left (East) onto Highway 154. Go 2.7 miles to traffic light. Turn right (West) on Highway 34 and go 1.4 miles to the next traffic light, Shell station on left. Turn left (South) on Sullivan Rd. and go 1.2 miles to "The Fairways" subdivision on the right. Turn into the subdivision and proceed to house number 395 on the right. This street is a cul-de-sac.

Brett Valliant: The Valiant Impresario of the Console

By John Clark McCall, Jr.

When you have written as many theatre organ concert reviews as I, you begin to search for new ways to express the very true adage that we are at the height of the finest musicianship ever witnessed in the near-century of the history of the theatre organ! And Brett Valliant certainly underscores my statement, witnessed by his incredible performance on February 24th at the equally incredible Reddish Walker RTO-335.

This Kansas native brings a world-wide perspective to his playing, embracing all that is good in theatre organ literature and packaging this literature with flawless arranging and polished and soulful playing. Having been lucky enough to have heard Brett at an informal "go" at the Fox Möller and at home at Bucky's Walker previous to this concert, I knew what to expect. You can imagine the fun this reviewer had in watching the response of the entire ATOS audience (friends included!) when Valliant became impresario of the console that afternoon.

Brett's playing immediately demonstrates several things...first off, a respect for good music and the composer's intentions with a composition; secondly, a maturity in playing style that defies his age; and most importantly, an enthusiasm about just being at a theatre



organ console that *immediately* translates into an aesthetic for his audience.

From ABBA to Sibelius is a long, winding musical road, and Brett covered it with a perfect match between artist and instrument. After a rousing *Wake Up And Live* (dear to many an Atlantan from the "Save the Fox" days with Lyn Larsen), Brett treated us to an upbeat Tommy Dorsey classic, *Opus One*, with some exceptional work on piano and pedal. The *South Pacific* chestnut, *Bali H'ai*, was not only magnificently conjured up in a literal sea of orchestrally lush voices, but it also could stand alone as an important lesson in the art of theatre organ arrangement and registration. The first half of the program covered a great deal of musical territory, from a lovely set of Cole Porter ballads, including an elegant, *I Concentrate On You*, to Charles Marie Widor's *Toccata* from the Fifth Organ Symphony. If anyone should ever question why Mr. Reddish sought to include classical samples (especially those by E. M. Skinner) in his Walker, Mr. Valliant demonstrated why. The Walker was crisp, clean, powerful and anything *but* a theatre organ in this tour-de-force; proving again, that the organ--in whatever guise--is truly the king of instruments. The orchestral transcription from Sibelius' *Finlandia* further demonstrated the classic organ and the orchestral organ

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**Atlanta Chapter,
American Theatre Organ Society**

P.O. Box 426
Marietta, Georgia 30061-0426
770-428-4091

www.theatreorgans.com/georgia/atlanta/atos/

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

We are pleased to announce that Atlanta Chapter president, Bucky Reddish, has been selected to be a member of the American Theatre Organ Society Board of Directors for a three-year term.

2008 DUES ARE NOW PAST DUE !!!

According to our By-Laws, Article VIII, dues are payable on January 1st and shall be paid within the first two months of the year.

Please pay your 2008 dues of \$35 (student \$17.50) now. Don't miss out on any of the wonderful things our chapter has to offer. Members who joined during the last quarter of 2007 are deemed members for 2008. ***Those who have not renewed by the end of February will be dropped from the newsletter distribution list.***

Make check payable to *Atlanta Chapter, ATOS* and mail to:

Wanda Carey Fields
413 Concord Rd SW
Smyrna, GA 30082-4509

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under the baton of one great leader. Maestro Valliant was up to the task and it was heartening to hear the kind of applause generated by his audience for this work.

The program's second half included a remarkable foray into the music of the popular group of the seventies and eighties, ABBA. Brett's arranging, his harmonies, and his rhythmic understanding of the music brought it all back in a poignant and powerful way. The songs included *Voulez Vous*, *The Winner Takes It All*, *Fernando* (with an unforgettable staccato pedal line), *Angel Eyes*, *Slipping Through My Fingers*, and the all-time hit *Dancing Queen*. Quentin MacLean has nothing on Mr. Valliant as proved by Brett's magnificent rendition of *In A Chinese Temple Garden*. As Brett said, this work provided a perfect excuse to use the unbelievable Chinese gong on the Walker and the almost limitless battery of percussions. It is unfortunate that the Regal Marble Arch cinema's Christie, where MacLean recorded *his* version in the 1930's, was not up to the tonal quality of the Walker! (This should stir some interesting discussion from our friends across the pond).

Brett claims that in addition to *Stranger In Paradise*, *I Remember You* is his other favorite ballad. You knew this immediately, and it is the benchmark by which this piece will be judged for a good time to

come. It possessed all the longing and melancholy of the way the great Dinah Washington recorded the song, leaving the audience somewhat breathless. *My Heart At Thy Sweet Voice* from Saint-Saens' opera, *Samson et Delilah* was so beautifully rendered that it was somewhat hard to applaud after its finish, as if the spell Brett placed on his audience might be lost. All too soon, the concert ended with *I'll Be Seeing You* and the brassy encore, *Twelfth Street Rag*.

Aside from the wonderful mix of musical selections, it is important to emphasize that the Reddish Walker—under the guidance of Bob Walker and his *Cobb County Voicing Authority* colleagues, Mssrs. Reddish and Thrower, has always been a work in progress. The approach to voicing by these talented men has been like a watchmaker at his workbench and the nuances and subtle changes we witness at each successive concert represents an inordinate amount of time and thought. This organ has earned a rightful place alongside authentic pipe organs, and in many instances—to this reviewer's mind—it exceeds them! When you add the most important ingredient, which is the organist, and that artist is someone like Brett Valliant, you truly have made musical history. And that's exactly what was done on Sunday. The caliber of our Chapter concerts is right at the top; I hope we never take them for granted!

A Message from the Board of Directors

In the latest edition of *Theatre Organ*, ATOS President Ken Double wrote, “Wait, you say, what about falling membership? Yes, our membership numbers are down to just under 4,000... Meanwhile, in the heyday of ATOS, when membership was 6,000 and more, it is important to remember that everybody was a member. It wasn’t until the late 1980’s that chapters began to allow what is at times called, ‘associate members,’ or those who are chapter members but not members of our national body. That factor alone counts for hundreds, if not thousands, of individuals who could greatly swell our membership numbers. To that end, I strongly encourage our local chapter leaders to ask two simple questions of our associate members. First, ‘Do you believe in the movement?’ Second, ‘Is the princely sum of \$3.34 per month too much to pay to support the movement?’”

All of the members of your Atlanta Chapter Board of Directors are members of that national body and we encourage all of you who are not members of ATOS national to consider expending that not-so-princely sum to further empower the cause of theatre organ across the country. What does the national organization do for us? They provide us with a central clearinghouse for theatre organ activities, archives, and endeavors. The national organization supports official competitions, a summer camp for young organists, annual and regional conventions, provides technical advice and resources for local organizations, and provides grants for local projects such as the Imperial, the Strand, and the Page.

The stronger our national organization is, the better we can serve the cause of preserving our beloved instruments and their music across the country. If you have questions, or are interested in joining, please contact any of us for information.

Playing the Stops – Flying by the Seat of Your Pants, A Seminar by Fox Theatre Organist-in-Residence Larry Douglas Embury April 19, 2008, 3:00 P.M. Bucky Reddish Residence

In early December, I received a call from Larry Douglas Embury asking me to accompany him to a choir rehearsal at Zion Hill Baptist Church in southwest Atlanta. Upon our arrival, we were escorted to the sanctuary where the Wednesday

Prayer and Praise service was underway. Shortly thereafter, the pastor interrupted the service to announce that Larry was present and would be playing the organ for them. Larry looked at me and shrugged – he had not known that he would be expected to play. He made his way to the console of an organ that he had never seen before and began to work his magic, drawing the audience into the performance, and soon they were singing along with him. It was reminiscent of his visit to the Ron and Donna Carter’s home when he sat down at a GW4 for the first time

and played magnificently. How do you sit down at an organ that you’ve never seen before and make great music?

Larry extended an offer to us over a year ago – a Christmas present – to conduct two seminars on “Playing the Stops” that will demonstrate the answer to that question. Bucky welcomes us to his home for the first of these seminars and it is a program not just for those who play but also for those who are fascinated with how an organist does what he does.

Larry Davis,
VP/Program Chairman

Bucky extends his thanks to Betty Anderson, Ted Barnett, Tom Cannon, Gail Hoke, Kim Magnuson, Svetlana Satterlee, and James Thrower for their invaluable help in making our February meeting such a success.



Jane and Frank Willingham were honored with a **Lifetime Achievement Award** from the Atlanta Chapter at our February meeting.

Closing Chords

Polly Brooke, Danny Brooke’s mother, who was a retired school teacher, passed away in San Antonio, Texas, on January 11th. Our sympathy goes out to the Brooke family.

Dick Weber, 88, former operator of *The Music Grinder* on Franklin Road in Marietta died on February 13th. He was living in Lula, GA and is survived by his wife Audrey and three daughters; Nancy, Sharon and Cindy. Dick was a strong supporter of ATOS for many years and brought our Page organ to Atlanta.



Hammond Organ, Romance Model 126214... Beautiful walnut finish in showroom condition. Family bought new in 1981. 2 manuals, 13-note pedalboard, \$650 OBO. Call Leah Wickham, 770-428-5731 or Emily Wickham, 770-428-0545.



ATTENTION

In order to save club money, we are offering you the option of receiving your monthly newsletter in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format by email instead of “snail” mail. This will not only save on postage expense, but reduce the reproduction and envelope costs. Also, it is in color. *Note:* These are fairly large files and this choice might not be satisfactory for dial-up internet connections.

If this is your preference, please email elfields@yahoo.com.

Thanks for the Donations

Randy & Betty Anderson
Bob McKoon
Svetlana Satterlee

In Memory of Charles Walker

Kenn Fields

Please note:
Our new mailing address is:
P.O. Box 426
Marietta, GA 30061-0426

However, in order to expedite handling, please send your dues payments and new Membership Applications to our treasurer, Wanda Fields, 413 Concord Rd SW, Smyrna, GA 30082-4509.

Welcome New Members

Susan Cole-Shaw
Deborah & Daryl Chambless
Ralph Daniel
Josh Duncan
Jeff Harbin

Upcoming Meetings & Events *(Mark your Calendars)*

- **March 9th, 3 P.M., Meeting, Larry Davis at the McKoon residence (January meeting moved to March)**
See January newsletter for details on artist and organ.
- March 30th, 2 P.M. CST, Ron Carter & James Thrower, organ & piano, at the Alabama Theatre in Birmingham
- April 5th, 7:30 P.M., Tivoli Theater in Chattanooga, **Gospel Legends in Concert** Sponsored by Chattanooga – Hamilton County Rescue Service Starring: The Stamps Quartet, The Blackwood Brothers Quartet, The Blackwood Singers, The Testimony Quartet. Members of the Atlanta Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society (Ron Carter & Larry Davis) to play the Wurlitzer 235 Special Pipe Organ placed at the Tivoli Theater in 1925. For ticket information call 423-642-8497 or online at www.etixs.com. All seats reserved.
- **April 19th, 3 P.M., Playing the Stops Seminar by Larry Douglas Embury at the Reddish residence (see Page 3 for more information)**
- **June 29th, 3 P.M., Meeting, Ron Rhode at the Reddish residence**
- Date and artists to be announced, Hamm-O-Rama at Joe Patten’s apartment in the Fox Theatre

Atlanta Chapter , ATOS - Membership Application

Name _____ Phone _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State/ZIP _____ E mail _____
 Do you own an organ? _____ If so, description _____

Annual membership dues \$35 (Student \$17.50). Please make check payable to *Atlanta Chapter, ATOS*. Meetings are held monthly, usually on the 3rd Sunday afternoon. Mail this application and your check to: Wanda Carey Fields, 413 Concord Road SW, Smyrna, GA 30082-4509