Volume 58, Number 1 January 2024

ATOS ATLANTA

Official Newsletter of The Atlanta Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society

HAPPY NEW YEAR!
WISHING YOU AND YOURS A
SAFE, HAPPY AND HEALTHY 2024!

JANUARY CHAPTER MEETING
SATURDAY, JANUARY 27, 2024
RIVERCENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
COLUMBUS, GA

JOINT MEETING WITH THE COLUMBUS CHAPTER AGO
CATERED LUNCH PROVIDED AT 1:30PM
PROGRAM/MEETING AT 2:30PM
OPEN CONSOLE

Please renew your ATOS Chapter membership if you haven't done so.

Level	Base	Cap
Student	$17.50	
Basic	$35.00	
Donor	$75.00	$149.00
Contributor	$150.00	$249.00
Sponsor	$250.00	$499.00
Patron	$500.00	And up

A Letter from your President

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American Theatre Organ Society
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Chapter President - Eddie Hulsey
Vice President - David Yackman
Treasurer - Lee Lanier
Secretary - Larry Davis
Newsletter Editor - Debbie Chambless
Chapter Correspondent - Larry Davis
Membership Director - Lee Lanier
Board members:
Kerry Bunn
Ron Carter
Rick Clear
Ken Double
Randy Hendry
Strand Project – Ron Carter
Page Project – Jack Sandow

Friends,

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot……" so begins Robert Burns great lyrical homage to the passing of one year to the next. For the Atlanta Chapter, it heralds the passing of the torch to a new slate of officers and a new board. It would be an unpardonable omission were I not to single out those who are transitioning into new roles for the tremendous debt of gratitude the entire chapter owes to the self sacrificing dedication to our cause.

Ken Double has left a remarkable list of achievements from his long tenure as President. From the low ebb of the COVID pandemic, to the mountaintop realizations of the Savannah Lucas reinstallation AND the Graham Jackson Scholarship. In his quiet and self effacing way, his leadership has left the chapter in a far greater position than when he took the helm.

Ron Carter, during his tenure as Vice President, brought to the chapter a litany of programs which exposed the Atlanta area to young artists on the cusp of greatness and brought some talented friends of the Chapter back for stellar events. From Clark Wilson's spectacular scoring of "Metropolis", to Ron's own brilliant accompaniments for countless beloved classic silent films, the theatre organ has increased in visibility and availability to a larger audience.

Paul Beavin undertook the position of treasurer and provided great oversight for our assets and accounts. Without fanfare he saw that the generous gifts to the Chapter were properly accounted for and all our financial obligations properly paid. This is an arduous and thankless job which he fulfilled with good humor and great efficiency.

To those who are rotating off the Board, thank you for your service. Your unwavering support of the officers allowed so many good things to happen.

To the incoming Board and officers, I look forward to working hand in hand to build upon the legacy we have been carefully handed.

To our members, I pledge to give my utmost for the Chapter and its mission. To borrow from Sir Winston Churchill, I promise to give blood, toil, tears, and sweat in a partnership with each of you. It is a cause that is close to my heart, and dear to my soul.

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As this is a partnership, I would ask three things out of the paddock:

1) See that your dues are current.
2) Be available to help when asked.
3) Be faithful in attendance.

You have a great opportunity to start 2024 by beginning to meet the third request. On January 27th, we have a joint meeting at RiverCenter in Columbus with the AGO. Please make plans to attend. Not only will the event be a musical delight, the fellowship will be fantastic. You might connect with new friends in the AGO, and help sway them to affiliate with our Chapter. It is a win-win situation! Let's work together to make 2024 a year of growth, achievement, and success for the Atlanta Chapter. Will you join with us for the cause, and do your part?

Happy New Year!
Eddie Hulsey

PLEASE RSVP TO ATTEND THE LUNCHEON AT RIVERCENTER

And speaking of our January Chapter Meeting on the 27th**, please RSVP by January 13th** if you are going to attend the catered lunch at 1:30. You may email David Yackman at the following address: david.yackman@gmail.com or text/call at 404-606-2224. We'd like to make sure River-Center has enough for everyone – but not too much!

Thanks,

David

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Thank you for your generous gifts!
Burt Allee
Tom Cronier
David Caron
David Tuck
David Yackman
Claire Kuhl
(daughter of Elbert & Liz Fields)

Welcome to our new Chapter Members!
Judy Hames
Claire Kuhl

WE ARE HEADED TO COLUMBUS…TWICE!

In an odd but exciting twist of scheduling, both our January and February chapter meetings will find us headed to Columbus, GA and the magnificent RiverCenter – the 2,000-seat monument to entertainment that houses our chapter-owned Allen GW IV theatre organ, known in those parts as *THE WAVE*!

On January 27, RiverCenter's major d'omo Norm Easterbrook has invited the Columbus area members of the AGO, along with our chapter, to a joint session of music and camaraderie that should be fun. Lunch will be served about 1:30, with a program set for 2:30.

NOTE: AS LUNCH IS BEING SERVED, NORM HAS REQUESTED AN RSVP – THUS A LIST OF THOSE ATTENDING. **Please reply to David Yackman no later than January 13 if you plan to attend by email or by call/text: david.yackman@gmail.com or 404-606-2224.** This way, Norm can plan his lunch in order to have enough to feed all coming.

The return trip is actually a double-bill, or double-header or whatever you want to title it, and it is exciting. On Saturday, February 17th, at 7:30, RiverCenter is hosting the inimitable Clark Wilson, presenting his tour-de-force presentation of the silent classic ***Metropolis***.

This is a ticketed event ($10 charge), and for those who have not witnessed this spectacular matching of film and artist, you are in for a magnificent evening of classic film entertainment. If you've seen it before, OF COURSE YOU WANT TO SEE IT AGAIN!

Then the next day, Sunday, February 18th, our chapter meeting will be a concert presentation on the GW IV with our own Ken Double at the console. In the audience will be the donors of this instrument, Dr. Marie Jureit-Beamish and her husband Bill – who is on a nearly world wide tour celebrating his 100th birthday! There is no ticket charge for chapter members for the Sunday concert with Ken. It is our chapter meeting.

Hotel arrangements are still "in the works" with our friends at the Marriott hotel right across the street from the theatre. Those details to come via email and the February newsletter.

Great opportunities in Columbus as we are thrilled to support Norm Easterbrook and everyone at RiverCenter working so hard and so successfully to introduce *THE WAVE* to a new audience in Southwest Georgia. Make your plans for these exciting chapter events.

SANTA'S MUSICAL GIFT WRAPPED IN IMPROV AND LAUGHS
David Marsh WOWS 'Em in Cumming

It's fun when the Atlanta Chapter membership has an opportunity to experience something new. And even though organist David Marsh is not new to us, his music certainly is, especially when the Marsh Magic for improvisation brings us a whole new presentation of the holiday chestnuts.

What indeed was new was our location and the instruments. The Cumming First United Methodist Church provided us the venue thanks to our wonderful partnership with chapter member John Hutchinson, organist and Director of Music at this marvelous church. And he rolled in his custom Hauptwerk digital organ – with LOTS of theatre organ stops – providing us with our first experience with this new technology. We also heard David treat us with selections on the Dyer 3/38 pipe organ and an unbelievable encore on the Schimmel grand piano.

David Marsh is unique, and once one gets one's mind wrapped around all of his improvisational skills, one quickly understands that David expertly fiddled around with Frosty; jostled with Jingle Bells; was rappin' to Rudolph; and was messin' around Mele Kalikimaka!

David opened with Santa Claus is Coming to Town, with plenty of rhythm and tempo variety; trems and off trems; jazz harmonies that made the tune sparkle; and a lot of musical fun, which was basically the theme of the entire 75-minute program.

Clad in his brand new holiday sweater (he left his dress shirt at home!), David's first portion included a lovely I'll Be Home for Christmas; a rather naughty and saucy Santa Baby; a gorgeous treatment of Away in a Manger/Silent Night medley style; and several more holiday favorites.

While joking that he was going to treat us to a couple of tunes he really didn't know all the way through - and after the laughter died down - he proved he DID know them. Brazilian Sleigh Bells is a fabulous Latin rhythm piece that challenges the organist with a busy left hand that must keep separate tempo from the syncopated melody line in the right hand. David's performance was brilliant, while he then smoothly transitioned into Leroy Anderson's Sleigh Ride, with enough half-step-up key changes (thanks to the transposer device) to make both John McCall and Ken Double take notice (AND forever stop apologizing for using the trick device!!).

Frosty; Let It Snow; and the aforementioned Mele Kalikimaka completed the Hauptwerk portion of the program, which demonstrated the great theatre organ voicing of John Hutchinson's creation.

We then entered the sanctuary and the 3/38 Dyer, which sounded more like 68 ranks, as the organ was rich, sumptuous, and powerful aided by the spectacular acoustical properties of the beautiful church.

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An encore was presented at the Schimmel grand piano, and gads was it GRAND! Go Tell It on the Mountain was a tour de force presentation of keyboard artistry that would have made Ferrante and Teicher blush, and yikes, they had FOUR HANDS and David only has two!

His fabulous music is spiced with a delightfully oddball sense of humor that brings thoughts of Victor Borge to mind. This was the whole package musically wrapped for the holidays.

It was wonderful to have the young man from Orange County, CA back with us, and we look forward to a future visit. A holiday gift for the ages, courtesy Santa and delightfully wonderful David Marsh.

Joyously submitted with holiday wishes from Mz. Biz. E. Boddy's second cousin twice removed,

Zelda (dizzier than just in her fingers) Confrey

Don't forget to renew your membership. We need you!
Renew at atosatlanta.org

Impressions of the Unconventional – Thoughts on David Marsh

A remarkable comparison is in order. In November, we heard a first-class performer whose performance style, keyboard skills, and on-stage persona are absolutely unique. That of course, was Hector Olivera. In December, we had the same experience. Well, not the "same," no. That would be an entirely wrong word to attach to this performer. But it was comparable: a first-class performer whose performance style, keyboard skills and on-stage persona are absolutely unique. The review of the December concert was placed in the competent hands of the inimitable Madame Confrey, so my comments are impressions as opposed to a review.

What is it like to attend a program with David Marsh? Well, as I told the artist afterwards, perhaps daringly, "There are chapters where you might not be received very well," and what I meant was that listeners must have a spirit that enjoys the unconventional: some places just don't. Atlanta is not one of those places, therefore David will always be welcome here to do – whatever it is that he does. We are a place where he can have fun and we can as well.

So, what is the "whatever" that he does? Well, to start, he turns things that organists often try to conceal into part of the show. Consider the transposer: he was not shy about using it, nor did he try to conceal it. He not only admitted it, but demonstrated it in the most delightful moment of spontaneity. In the middle of a Christmas song, he used the transposer to generate chromatic chords creating the dramatic sense of something dire coming – and then launched back into the song, Santa Claus is Coming to Town, or some such At one point, he "forgot," he said, that the transposer was on and changed it openly, right in the middle of a song; suddenly he was playing in another key. At one point he took a unplanned step off the platform (which we have all done), an almost fall, turned it into a demonstration, told an entertaining story about another venue, and then inadvertently, later almost stumbled again, at which he just took on a "whatever" look . There was nothing hidden about what he was doing. He played songs that he asserted that he didn't know – I'm not sure about that either – and yes, there were wrong notes but with David, they might have been deliberate. Who knows? That's the kind of guy he is.

What's the offset to all this unconventional behavior? It is what the young folk call "mad skills." Start with his fingering: he moves at lighting speed, even through very difficult and complicated passages. I'd like to see a duel between him and Nathan Avakian and David Gray. Second, his articulation. A term used more in the piano world – more about that later – his fast notes are clear and discreet: the comparison that emerged in my mind was listening to pianist Earl Wild play Chopin, with every note of the fast passages separate and distinct. This Is Hard To Do! David does it seemingly effortlessly but really, it takes a great deal of practice.

His musicality is superb: he possesses the ability to take a song and put it through all sorts of variations and permutations to make it, well, different. How different? Sometime, when you listen to David play, ask yourself – "have I ever heard this song played anything like this anywhere before?" I already know what your answer will be. And the registrations are both perfectly suited to what he is trying to do and themselves creatively unusual, exploiting the resources of the organ well. And, one might say, sometimes the whole is (once again) an unconventional approach to the song itself.

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And all this keyboard virtuosity is interspersed with commentary and jokes that are humorous – if he tells you they are – and self-deprecating. At the break, I turned to Brad Sorano and said, “This guy is the Victor Borge of the organ,” and he said, “I was just about to say that!”

I said I’d get back to the piano – David decided to do his encore on the grand piano. It was a stunning experience. He put all his technical ability – fingering, speed, articulation – on display in a created-in-the-moment transcription of Go Tell It On the Mountain, with glittering arpeggios and fiery octaves, a tour de force that had the classical piano enthusiasts in the room – me, and Brad and Seth Sorano – in awe. His playing was that of a great artist and made us wish – as we often did with Borge – that he would allow us to hear him play a classical work seriously. Maybe someday.

This young man cannot be constrained with the chains of conventionality. He boldly goes where no one has gone before.

Larry Davis

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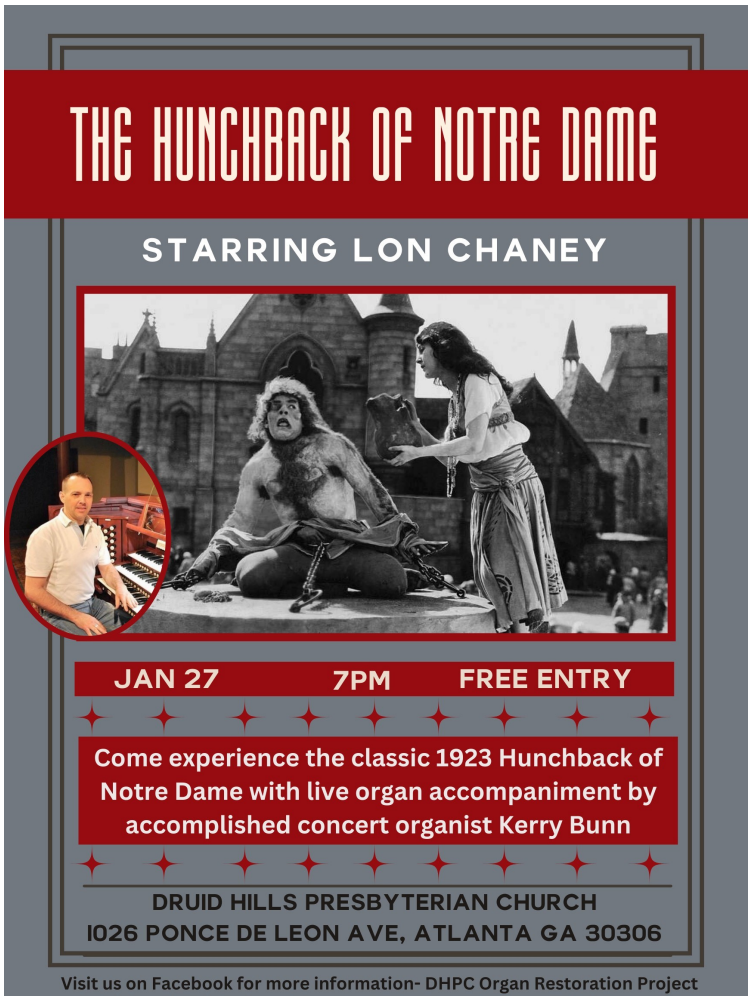
An Opportunity to Hear One of Our Newest Members Play
Please support Kerry Bunn if you can



Upcoming Chapter Meetings

January Chapter Meeting

Saturday, January 27 - 2:30PM
RiverCenter for the Performing Arts
Joint Meeting with the Columbus AGO

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RSVP by January 13th to attend the catered lunch at 1:30.
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david.yackman@gmail.com or text/call at 404-606-2224.

February Chapter Meeting

Sunday, February 18 - 2:30PM
RiverCenter for the Performing Arts
Ken Double in Concert

Ron Carter
Strand Theatre Events
Pre-Shows by Strand Organists

Friday, January 19	The Shining - 8:00PM - Pre-show Organist TBA
Saturday, January 20	10 Things I Hate About You - 8:00PM - Pre-show Organist TBA
Sunday, February 18	Little Women - 3:00PM - Pre-show organist TBA

Upcoming Events

Sunday, February 11 - 2:00PM (CST)
Alabama Theatre - Birmingham, AL
Larry Davis in Concert for a meeting of the Alabama Chapter
All are welcome!

Saturday, February 17 - 7:30PM
RiverCenter for the Performing Arts
Metropolis - Accompanied by Clark Wilson
$10.00 Ticket Fee

Opportunities to Hear Great Music
Mark Your Calendars!
Richard Hills in Concert

We have arranged for Richard Hills to give the official inaugural concert on the newly installed Style 260 Wurlitzer in the Oriental Theatre in Milwaukee on Tuesday evening, May 28th 2024.

Because we have to work around the Milwaukee Film schedule, Richard's program will be on the Tuesday weeknight, that gives a sufficient lead time to make as many theatre organ devotees as possible aware of the event.

We anticipate people coming from all around the country. Since the Wurlitzer was originally installed in the Howard (later Paramount) Theatre in Atlanta, there should be interest from that area. Additionally, Richard is giving the inaugural concert on the restored 2/8 Wurlitzer in the new performing arts center down state in Rushville, IL. That program is scheduled for Thursday evening May 30th.

These two concerts have to be held on week nights because of Richard's teaching schedule. It is a rare opportunity for us to experience the fabulous artistry of Richard Hills in person and two times in one week is extra special.

Robert Ridgeway