

ATOS Atlanta

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



Amazing Road Trips!

When things get back to some sense of normalcy, here are a couple of entertaining road trips.

Northlandz - Flemington, NJ

Northlandz is a miniature wonderland of the world's largest model railroad and museum. It also features 200 dolls from around the world, a 94-room dollhouse and **ORGANS!** They offer scheduled concerts on the 39 rank Marr and Colton hybrid theater pipe organ controlled by a 5-manual Wurlitzer console. In addition, they have an Allen GW IV, a 12-manual Virtual Theatre Pipe Organ, a Hammond electronic and a Rodgers electronic theatre organ. (northlandz.com)

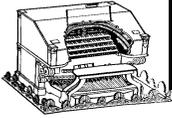


The Music House Museum—Traverse City, MI

The Music House Museum houses one-of-a-kind rare and antique instruments and music-making machines from 1870 through 1930. There are many player pianos, music boxes and nickelodeons as well as a large Mortier Dance Hall Organ and Wurlitzer Theater Pipe Organ. They offer concerts and silent movies. (musichouse.org)



These are pictures from my visits. Hope all of you are safe and well! Debbie



A Letter from your President



Ah, what might have been?

Two interesting items popped into my pea-brain as I sat to write the President’s Message for this newsletter. The first was this: what a shame we are not writing and reviewing what would have been a splendid concert from one of our brightest young performers, Brett Miller. As it was with Clark Wilson and *Metropolis*, so it was with Brett. April 25th with this brilliant young performer at the Page postponed.

We will be working as soon as possible to reschedule both of these performances. So, fear not, postponed is the word – not cancelled!

Meanwhile, what was the second item? Many of us in the Atlanta Chapter would have been in the final stages of preparation for the 2020 ATOS convention had it not been for Broadway show scheduling changes at the Fox back in 2018. I felt horrible at the time for a lot of reasons, not the least of which that snafu put a lot of pressure on ATOS, and in particular our friends at the Central Indiana Chapter. They literally threw together a convention lineup in about half the normal time frame for planning. Obviously, a convention for 2020 was not meant to be.

I have the opportunity to stroll over to the Fox and exercise Mighty Mo now and then. We are in touch with officials at Stephenson High School regarding the Page, and monitoring that situation. Except for water, there is nothing worse for a theatre organ than lack of use.

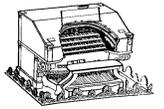
Thus, the sooner we can get back to whatever “normal” is going to look like, the better. I have an idea for a blowout celebration for the chapter that will be great fun....once it is OK for all of us to get together.

Stay safe. Stay healthy. Later in this missive you will find some opportunities to get your “theatre organ fix” from many different avenues of enjoyment. And we will chat again soon, hopefully with news of our next meeting and visit live and in person.

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THE STRAND AND THE PLAZA – MAKING BEAUTIFUL MUSIC SEPARATELY

Hats off and a lot of credit to the management of both the Earl and Rachel Smith Strand Theatre in Marietta, and to the Plaza Theatre in Atlanta.

What does the ownership and management of those two entities do when shut down by circumstances beyond their control? They get creative and find ways to maintain visibility and relevance even though they can't open the doors.

At the Strand, the brilliant Andy Gaines and his staff have organized a series of different performances that are being "streamed" online, allowing people to at least enjoy the Strand from home. These "Living Room" concerts have included brilliant performances by Ron Carter on his GW 4, showing silent films and explaining the intricacies of playing the theatre organ.

LIVING ROOM SESSIONS/ THE MIGHTY ALLEN on Youtube

Watch three silent Buster Keaton Comedies accompanied by Ron Carter on the Carter's home Allen GW4 that was streamed on Saturday night April 25th as part of the Strand's virtual program series and now available on Youtube and on the Strand's Facebook page.

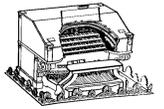
Meanwhile, Chris Escobar (son-in-law of Hector Olivera) owns and operates the Plaza Theatre, and he and his staff are doing all kinds of things, from selling popcorn, beer and wine, t-shirts and more out of the "back door" of the theatre (WITH City Hall approval, thank you!!), to continuing their midnight Friday screenings of the Rocky Horror Picture Show.

In early April, Chris and Ken Double cooked up "Saturday Silents," featuring the Allen LLQ theatre organ and a short silent comedy Saturday afternoons at 3 pm, live streamed on the Plaza Theatre's Facebook page and available via YouTube.

This is a fantastic way to work with our partners, Andy and Chris, who are SO VERY supportive of the theatre organ, and contribute what we can to assist them in their own efforts to simply survive.

While wearing that "hat" of ATOS President for 10 years, I had the chance to travel everywhere and interact with chapters everywhere. There are few who are as blessed as we are. We are blessed to have the Fox in our midst; we are blessed to own two outstanding Allen organs; we are blessed to have theatre management that loves the theatre organ and wants to have it played – thank you Andy Gaines and Chris Escobar.

And we are blessed to have folks like Ron Carter who "get it!" And understand how best to position the chapter with theatre management for these "win-win" situations, especially during these times of stress, duress, and facing the unknown. The kinds of things we here in Atlanta accomplish simply don't happen everywhere else, believe me. We ARE blessed!



WHERE TO FIND SOME THEATRE ORGAN MUSIC AND PERFORMANCES

We have mentioned the Strand Theatre programming streamed online, and the Plaza Theatre “Saturday Silents,” programming that affords you the opportunity to enjoy some great theatre organ music. What else is out there? Plenty!

If you have not dialed up the ATOS website and clicked on the “Theatre Organ Radio – Listen Now” tab, you are missing out. Operating like a radio station, Theatre Organ Radio simply plays all kinds of theatre organ music from all manner of performer 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Much thanks to a good friend of our chapter, Steve Worthington (a transplanted Brit who used to attend Bucky’s gatherings on a regular basis), who programs the channel brilliantly.

In addition to that, Steve Ashley produces “Hot Pipes” from his home. Another transplanted Brit, Steve now lives in Spain, and his program is available on line. There is information on it in the ATOS journal, or simply “Google” Hot Pipes and Steve Ashley and you will find it.

While at the keyboard of your computer, go to YouTube, type in “Dickinson Theatre Organ Society” and you will get an-eye-and-earful.

DTOS in Wilmington, DE, home of one of the finest theatre organs in the world – the great Kimball – has been live-streaming their concert programs for more than a year. Want to see and hear Richard Hills? Dave Wickerham? Heaven forbid, Ken Double? Full concerts from introduction to encore and final bow are available on YouTube. With ear phones, the audio quality is outstanding, coupled with a three-camera production, and you have a wonderful presentation of a great, live theatre organ concert.

Mark Herman has been showcasing the now-famous “Bandrika” Wurlitzer (former Fox movie studio Wurlitzer now in the recording studio of Hollywood film composer Nathan Barr) with some fine music, along with some piano stylings as well.

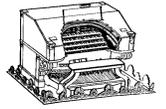
If one gets a little creative with an online search, (example – just “Google” Jim Riggs or any performer’s name, and you will find something), one can find a LOT of theatre organ music and programming available – more than enough to take care of anyone’s “fix” for some great music on the theatre organ.

Have fun exploring. We will have more news in our June newsletter, hopefully including a date and location for our next meeting.

Don't forget to renew your ACATOS Membership! Please review the membership options and consider renewing at the Contributor or Patron level.



Level	Base	Cap
Student	\$17.50	
Basic	\$35.00	
Donor	\$36.00	\$99.00
Contributor	\$100.00	\$199.00
Sponsor	\$200.00	\$299.00
Patron	\$300.00	And up



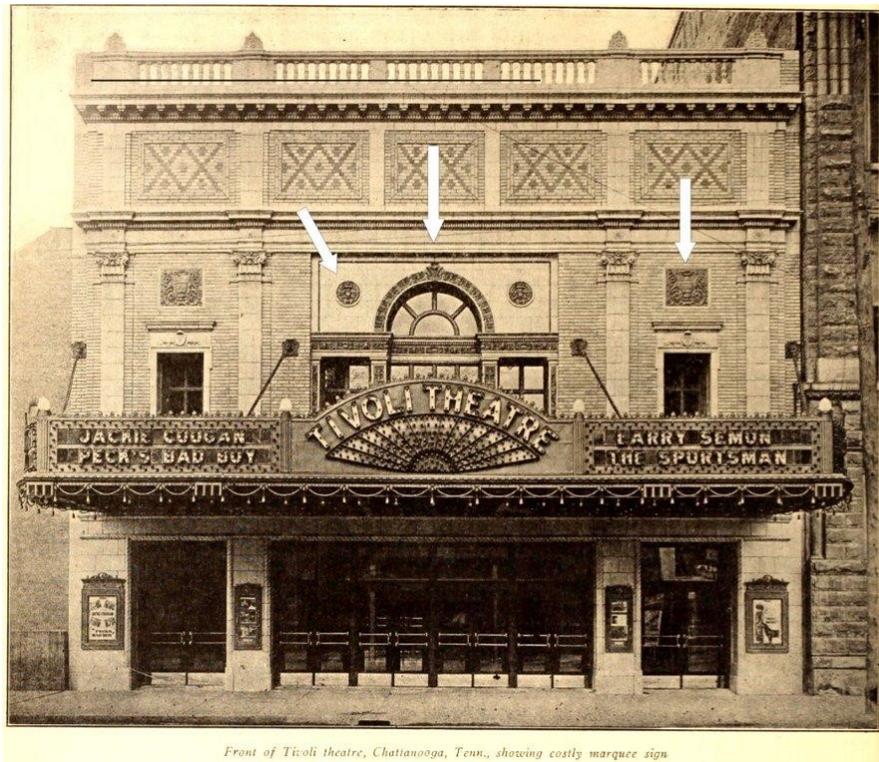
Things that go un-noticed

In last month's newsletter I posted several photographs of some architectural details of one of the theatres that many of our members have attended over the years. It was up to the membership to guess which theatre and where these details were located.

Well it seems like it stumped our readership, in that I got no response as to which theatre and where the details were.

The photographs are of the terra cotta tiles and moldings that adorn the facade of the Tivoli Theatre in Chattanooga. Granted, they are a little hard to see, except from across the street. Nonetheless, they are only a few of the hundreds of little details that go into making a visit to one of the movie palaces so special, but often go un-noticed.

Below is a 1923 Photograph of the Tivoli, with arrows showing where the details in the façade are located.



Front of Tivoli theatre, Chattanooga, Tenn., showing costly marquee sign

So next time you go to a show at the Tivoli, Alabama, or the Fox, remember that not only is there a show on the stage, but that there is another show going on all around you. Next time, take a few minutes to take that show in, you may be surprised at what you might find.

John Tanner