



ATOS ATLANTA



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

THERE WILL BE A MAY CHAPTER MEETING, WE PROMISE!

And it will be memorable on Memorial Day Weekend

Saturday, May 24 or

Sunday, May 25

The Plaza Theatre or Stephenson High School

Auditorium, 701 Stephenson Road, Stone Mountain GA

Please note that both options include a Lee Lanier BBQ Lunch! *See page 9*



**The filming of the Chariot
Race in Ben Hur** Pages 3, 4 & 5

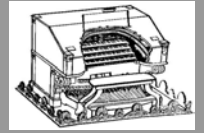


Lynne Hart and Jay Mitchell
Page 7 & 8

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

April blew by so fast that I almost forgot I needed to write this month's message! It feels like I blinked and the calendar just decided it was May. Time flies when you're . . . well, whatever it was that I was doing, I'm sure it was productive. Or at least it felt that way at the time.

We've had to roll with the punches lately. Unfortunately, our planned Juan Cardona concert in April was sidelined because the Stephenson High School auditorium is still essentially a hard-hat zone. It's looking like May might present the same challenges, so please keep a close eye on the events section of this newsletter, your email inbox, and our website for the latest schedule gymnastics. A huge thank you to Ken Double for his work navigating our recent "unstable venue" situation - it's been a moving target, to say the least.

However, there is a very bright light at the end of this construction tunnel - quite literally. Ken and I caught a preview of the school's technical upgrades on April 16th, and "incredible" doesn't quite cover it. The theatre now boasts an Obsidian ONYX lighting console that can control the color, brightness, and position of every brand-new LED fixture in the house.

There's going to be a bit of a learning curve before we're putting on a full-scale light show like the one the technicians from AWS Lighting demonstrated, but I managed to absorb just enough during the training session to at least find the "on" switch without blowing a fuse. Baby steps, right?

The project has admittedly run a bit long, but the additions are impressive. Technicians are currently installing a massive new

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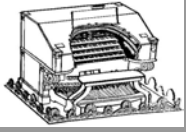
Lee Lanier
Atlanta Chapter, ATOS
220 Dunwoody Creek Circle
Sandy Springs, GA 30350
404-790-5400 www.atosatlanta.org
www.facebook.com/ATOSAtlanta

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Chapter President – David Yackman
Vice President – Ken Double
Treasurer – Lee Lanier
Secretary – Larry Davis
Newsletter Editor – Brady Born
Chapter Correspondent – Larry Davis
Membership Director – Lee Lanier
Board Members:

Brady Born
Ron Carter
Ken Double
Randy Hendry
Eddie Hulsey
David Tuck

Strand Project – Ron Carter



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movie screen at stage level to complement the smaller one already in place mid-auditorium. Both are backed by two brand-new 4K HD laser projectors. It's a setup that practically begs for the presentation of a silent film or two, and I'm hopeful we'll be enjoying exactly that once the dust finally settles this summer.

And speaking of summer... it's only a month away. Ready or not!

Regards,

David Yackman



On set filming Ben Hur in Hollywood



Ben Hur – Motion Picture Poster



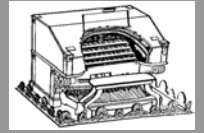
Main Characters



Main Characters

A DAY OF DELIGHT, SURPRISES, AND INSPIRATION

The Chamber Mouse had planned to hide in the shadows for a program at Stephenson High this month but on an early exploratory visit, he found that the auditorium was not habitable even for a mouse. The Strand Theatre was much more inviting though he believes that this is the first time



he has reviewed a silent film. And what a magnificent film! He reports from his usual station at the Strand: in the lower main chamber behind the decorative urn.

In every organization, there are times in which carefully laid plans are undone by events beyond the control of the organizers. That was the case with the chapter this month. However, it is rare that substitute plans are as wonderfully successful as they were this month. Perhaps it shouldn't be a surprise because the chapter is replete with so much stellar talent, and that talent was on display on the Sunday after Easter. The Strand Theatre had programmed a silent film as part of their ongoing series, this one the spectacular, legendary 1925 *Ben-Hur*, with Ron Carter presenting the accompanying music.

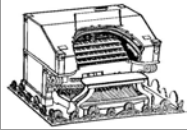
The afternoon opened with Eddie Hulsey providing the pre-show music, opening with one of his signature songs, "Happy Days Are Here Again." Eddie then explained that *Ben-Hur* was released December 30, 1925 but opened in most theatres in 1926, and then launched into a series of songs that would have been heard in theatres in those years. Following a rousing sing-a-long, Eddie closed his part of the show with another of his signature works, Frederick Weatherly's "The Holy City," perfectly suited for the season and for the film.

As Eddie closed, the Strand Theatre's Executive Director Andy Gaines came out on stage with two of his sons to welcome the audience and to thank the sponsors – he thought! But in the surprise



of the afternoon, he was interrupted by Ron Carter, Larry Davis, and Eddie Hulsey, who joined him on stage to present Andy with the Atlanta Chapter's President's Award. The President's Award is given to those who are not necessarily members of the chapter, but who make ongoing and significant contributions in helping the chapter fulfill our mission. Larry Davis explained the award and explained why Andy was receiving it. Ron Carter read the text of the award: "American Theatre Organ Society

Atlanta Chapter President's Award - presented to Andy Gaines, The Strand Theatre, Marietta, GA in recognition of your many years of advocacy and support of the Strand's Mighty Allen Organ, presenting it through concerts, silent films, before plays, films, and musicals, thereby making theatre organ an integral part of community life." Enthusiastic applause followed, leaving Andy almost – but not quite – speechless. He pulled himself together to conclude his duties and to introduce our new friend, Scott McGee. *Editor: See associated photos re: Andy Gaines on page 6.*



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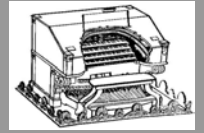
Mr. McGee, a film historian, film expert, and author from TCM, using extensive slides, presented the history of *Ben-Hur*, from the book to the first film, to the 1925 film and the 1950's film. Using a group of revealing educational slides as support, he talked about the filming of the 1925 film occurring in both Italy and Hollywood. He described the scope, the scale, and the challenges of the production, and discussed the nature and issues involved in filming the action scenes of the film, which are covered in his book *Danger on the Silver Screen*. Mr. McGee concluded his lecture by introducing Ron Carter.

If you have heard Ron accompany a silent film, no description is necessary; if you have not, no description is adequate. Ron brought the console up to themes from the 1961 film *King of Kings*, and after short comments, took the console down to picture level, and on the screen came the title *Ben-Hur – A Tale of the Christ*. The story followed, and Ron's score drew from many sources. Much of it was his own composition but to that he joined themes from the 1959 *Ben-Hur*, other musical compositions, and impressively, Franz Lizst's monumental work *Les Preludes*. Truly making the theatre organ a "unit orchestra," he used not only the orchestral voices, but tweeting birds and rolling thunder to bring to musical life the grand story. At the end, with music from Albert Hay Malotte's mighty composition thundering away: "Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory", the console rose to equally thunderous applause.

It was monumentally successful program, and not only for chapter members, but for all who were in attendance that afternoon.

The Chamber Mouse

ATOS CHAPTER MEETINGS AND EVENTS		
May 23 or 24 2026 Saturday or Sunday	Ken Double	The Grande Page at Stephenson High School or The Plaza
June 14, 2026 Sunday at 3:00 PM	Juan Cardona Jr.	The Grande Page at Stephenson High School
July 26, 2026 Sunday at 3:00 PM	Richard Hills	The Grande Page at Stephenson High School

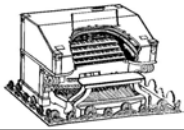


THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD

After receiving the President's Award, Andy sent two gracious notes to both the Atlanta Chapter and to the presenter, Ron Carter.

	<p>ATLANTA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY, FIRST, LET ME SAY THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO TO MAKE THE STRAND SPECIAL. WHILE THE PRESENTATION ON OUR STAGE WAS A BEAUTIFUL SURPRISE AND I AM GRATEFUL. IT IS ACTUALLY 15 MINUTES BEFORE</p>	<p>RON: WHAT AN UTTERLY SHOCKING SURPRISE YOU GAVE ME ON SUNDAY! TO HAVE THE BOYS WITH ME, I AM SO THANKFUL TO YOU, LARRY, EDDIE, <u>ALL</u> OUR DRAMAS, AND OF COURSE THE ATLANTA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN</p>
<p>Andy Gaines</p>	<p>THAT SHOWCASES WHY THIS IS SPECIAL. I WAS OUTSIDE GREETING PATRONS WHEN A FAMILY WHO HAS NEVER COME BEFORE WALKED UP. THEY DIDN'T HAVE TICKETS, BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP ME FROM TELLING THEM JUST TO COME FOR A MINUTE. I HAD SOMETHING SPECIAL TO SHOW THEM. MR. EDDIE AND OUR MIGHTY ALLEN. THEN, MY FAVORITE PHRASE, "THIS IS SO SPECIAL" I AGREE. THE STRAND IS SPECIAL AND IT IS BECAUSE OF ATOS'S INVESTMENT. THANK YOU! -ANDY</p>	<p>SOCIETY, I'M SO THANKFUL AND LUCKY TO HAVE PARTNERS LIKE YOU AND ATOS. IF THE SHOW STRAYS ON THE SIDEWALK (WHICH IT DOES!) THEN THE STRAND IS BLESSED TO CONTINUE IT IN THE THEATRE AS THE CURTAIN RISES TO GREET OUR PATRONS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SERVING TO THE STRAND. -ANDY</p>
<p>Andy's note to ACATOS</p>	<p>Andy's Note to Ron Carter</p>	

Speaking of the President's Award, the Board of Directors also approved the presentation of that award to Norm Easterbrook upon his retirement from RiverCenter in Columbus, GA. Norm first became involved in the chapter's mission while he was Executive Director of the Rylander Theatre in Americus. There he worked with James Thrower, John McCall, and particularly John Tanner during the installation of the Rylander Möller, hosted the premiere concert with Ron Rhode, and sponsored a concert series that including Walt Strony, Simon Gledhill and Rosa Rio. He departed for a post in the west and after returning to RiverCenter, he oversaw the coming of the Allen GW4, named it "The Wave," and made it a part of the life of the arts center. Norm has now retired and at his retirement party, Ron Carter, Larry Davis, and Ken Double announced the presentation of the award to him. *(see photos on next page)*



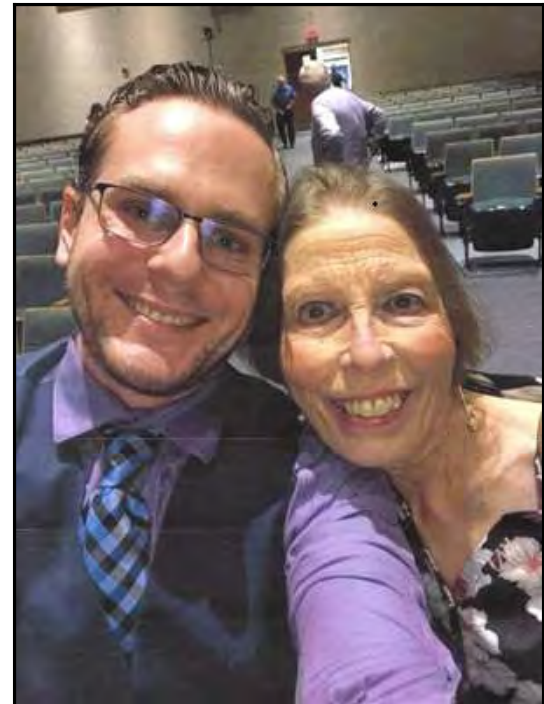
CLOSING CHORD

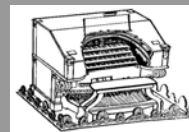
Longtime member, Lynne Hart, passed away April 18th, of a heart ailment brought on by “Long Covid” which she had originally contracted during the 2020 epidemic.

She was raised in the Episcopal Church and took piano lessons from her grandmother, who was a professional piano teacher. Lynne could sight read practically any new music score, up to tempo, and favored Mendelssohn, Chopin, and Ragtime.

Lynne eventually became a church organist and played for several churches including Baptist, Methodist, Episcopal and Lutheran denominations. She returned to the piano in her later life, playing for Forest Park United Methodist Church and New Life Methodist Church, in Conley, Georgia.

Lynne’s calling to the Theatre Organ was brought on by hearing Bob Van Camp playing 'Mighty Mo' at the Fox. She took a place





as a crew member in the initial Atlanta Chapter’s “Ladies Cleanup Brigade” when “Save The Fox” efforts first began in 1979-80.

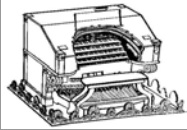
While she never became an Atlanta Chapter officer, nor played a musical program for us, she nonetheless attended every meeting and program she could, and always presented us with a smile and a very cheerful and giving presence. Lynne is survived by her son, Charles, and grandson Ethan, two affectionate dogs, Benji and Missy, and Scooter, her beloved 21-year-old domestic turtle. *Editor: That is David Marsh in the photo with Lynne.*

Jay Mitchell

STRAND THEATRE EVENTS – Live Stage Musical

FOOTLOOSE – an American musical drama that tells the story of Ren McCormack, a teenager from Chicago who moves to a small town, where he attempts to overturn a ban on dancing enforced by the efforts of a local minister. It contains Academy Award nominated songs “Footloose” and “I’m Free” by Kenny Loggins, “Let’s Hear It for the Boy” by Deniece Williams, “Somebody’s Eyes” by Karla Bonoff, and “Almost Paradise” by Mike Reno and Ann Wilson. This is a live action stage musical rather than the 1984 motion picture.

Friday, May 15	Footloose	8:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:30 PM, Ron Carter
Saturday, May 16	Footloose	3:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 2:30 PM, Larry Davis 8:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:30 PM, Larry Davis
Sunday, May 17	Footloose	3:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 2:30 PM, Misha Stefanuk
Thursday, May 21	Footloose	7:30 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:00 PM, Ken Double
Friday, May 22	Footloose	8:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:30 PM, Larry Davis
Saturday, May 23	Footloose	3:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 2:30 PM, Ken Double 8:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:30 PM, Ken Double
Sunday, May 24	Footloose	3:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 2:30 PM, Ron Carter
Thursday, May 28	Footloose	3:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 2:30 PM, Misha Stefanuk 8:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:30 PM, Larry Davis
Friday, May 29	Footloose	8:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:30 PM, Larry Davis
Saturday, May 30	Footloose	3:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 2:30 PM, Misha Stefanuk 8:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:30 PM, Larry Davis
Sunday, May 31	Footloose	3:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 2:30 PM, Ken Double
Thursday, June 4	Footloose	3:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 2:30 PM, Debbie Chambless 8:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:30 PM, Debbie Chambless



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Friday, June 5	Footloose	8:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:30 PM, Debbie Chambless
Saturday, June 6	Footloose	3:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 2:30 PM, Debbie Chambless 8:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:30 PM, TBA
Sunday, June 7	Footloose	3:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 2:30 PM, Ron Carter

THERE WILL BE A MAY CHAPTER MEETING, WE PROMISE!

And it will be memorable on Memorial Day Weekend

The past two months have been hectic and difficult in attempting to settle on dates for Atlanta Chapter meetings. The 50th annual Atlanta Film Festival made access to the Plaza Theatre difficult. And ongoing updates and construction in the auditorium at Stephenson High School have severely limited access to the auditorium and our Page pipe organ.

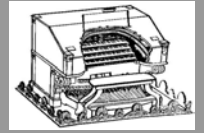
We will be meeting later this month, under one of the following scenarios:

PLAN A: Stephenson High School
 Sunday, May 24 at 3 pm
 Ken Double at the Grande Page
 Lee Lanier and his fabulous BBQ lunch!
 Announcement by email blast and telephone contact SOON!

--- OR ---

PLAN B: The Plaza Theatre
 Saturday, May 23 or Sunday, May 24 - whichever is best for theatre timing
 Ken Double at the Allen organ
 Lee Lanier providing his famous BBQ lunch
 Announcement by email blast and telephone contact SOON!

We appreciate your patience. Our hope is to get the OK to have the meeting at the school. That is the weekend right after school ends, and should be good to go, but until we get the green light, we have to remain flexible. Hang in there, gang, more to come SOON!!



STRAND THEATRE EVENTS - Films

Saturday, May 9	Twister	8:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:30 PM, Ken Double
Wednesday, June 3	Cinderella (1950)	2:30 PM, Pre-show Organist at 1:30 PM, Misha Stefanuk
Friday, June 12	Jaws	8:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:30 PM, Misha Stefanuk
Friday, June 19	Hairspray	8:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:30 PM, Misha Stefanuk
Sunday, June 26	Singing in the Rain	8:00 PM, Pre-show Organist at 7:30 PM, TBA

Reed Organ for Free

This is from a musician friend of mine. George is in his eighties and this belonged to his mother-in-law. It will require re-leathering of the bellows at a minimum but it does not have the pouches of a pipe organ. It should be a manageable task and if not, a handsome piece of furniture. It is available for the low, low price of FREE. And I can probably deliver it to you. We just wish to find it a new home. The upper section typically just sits upon the lower section, see, photo number 3, below.

Brady Born
Editor

